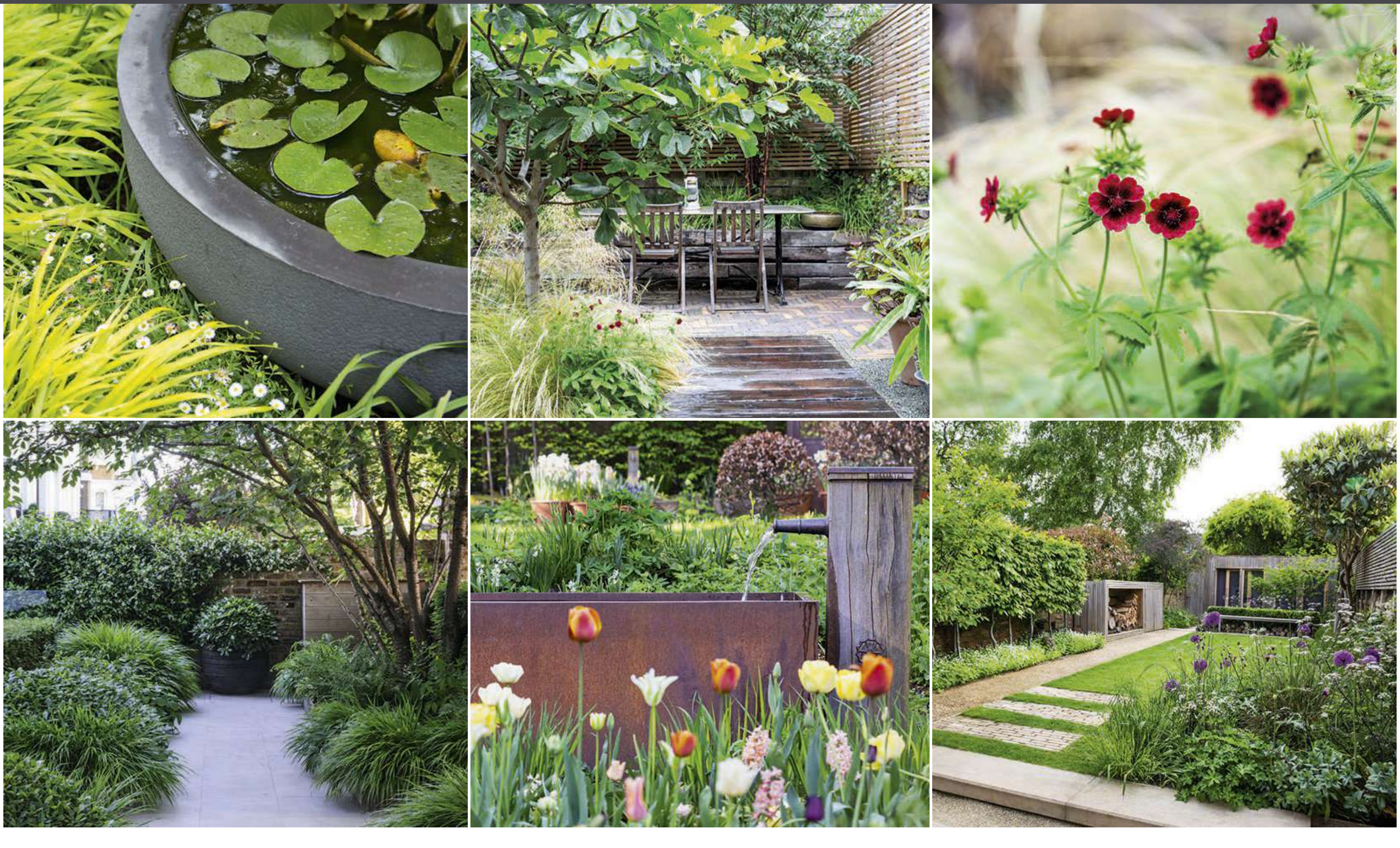
GARDENS
ILLUSTRATED

Small Gardens

22 inspiring design and planting ideas for small outdoor spaces



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“Having a critique from someone who is clearly an expert gives you confidence - they really know what they are talking about.

- David

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It is amazing to be able to learn and receive feedback directly from the experts.

- Julia

Editor's letter

Small Gardens is a special issue from *Gardens Illustrated*, giving you ideas, inspiration and advice on how to get the most from your outdoor space, whatever its size. We feature 22 gardens, grouped into clear sections that help define the style you want for your plot and how you're going to use it. Design ideas range from sharp, architectural lines softened by lush planting, to plantspeople's gardens that celebrate the abundance of planting that can be fitted into the smallest of spaces. And with the environmental necessity of not simply turning our front gardens into hard standings, we ask two expert designers, Sarah Price and Annie Guilfoyle, to consider how to make these often neglected entrances to our homes into valuable garden spaces that are stylish, practical and filled with plants.

Whether you are a novice looking to create your first outdoor haven, or an experienced gardener wanting to freshen up your approach to planting design, I hope you'll find *Small Gardens* an invaluable resource to the planning of your new garden.

Lucy Bellamy

LUCY BELLAMY, EDITOR

JASON INGRAM

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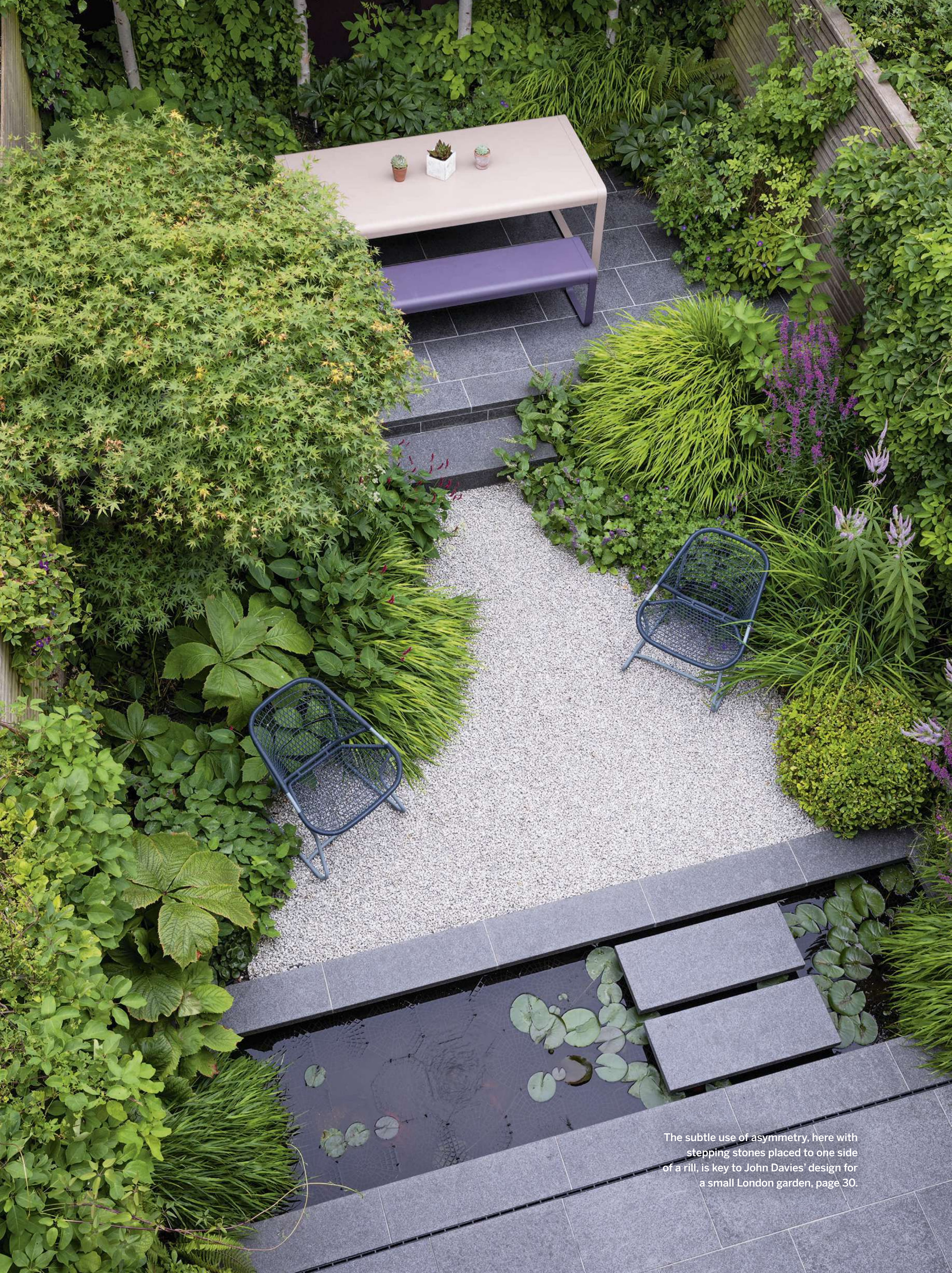

The subtle use of asymmetry, here with stepping stones placed to one side of a rill, is key to John Davies' design for a small London garden, page 30.

ARCHITECTURAL GARDENS

Creating a garden along structural lines derived from surrounding buildings and sculptural features creates a sense of order and cohesiveness that can be softened by luxurious planting

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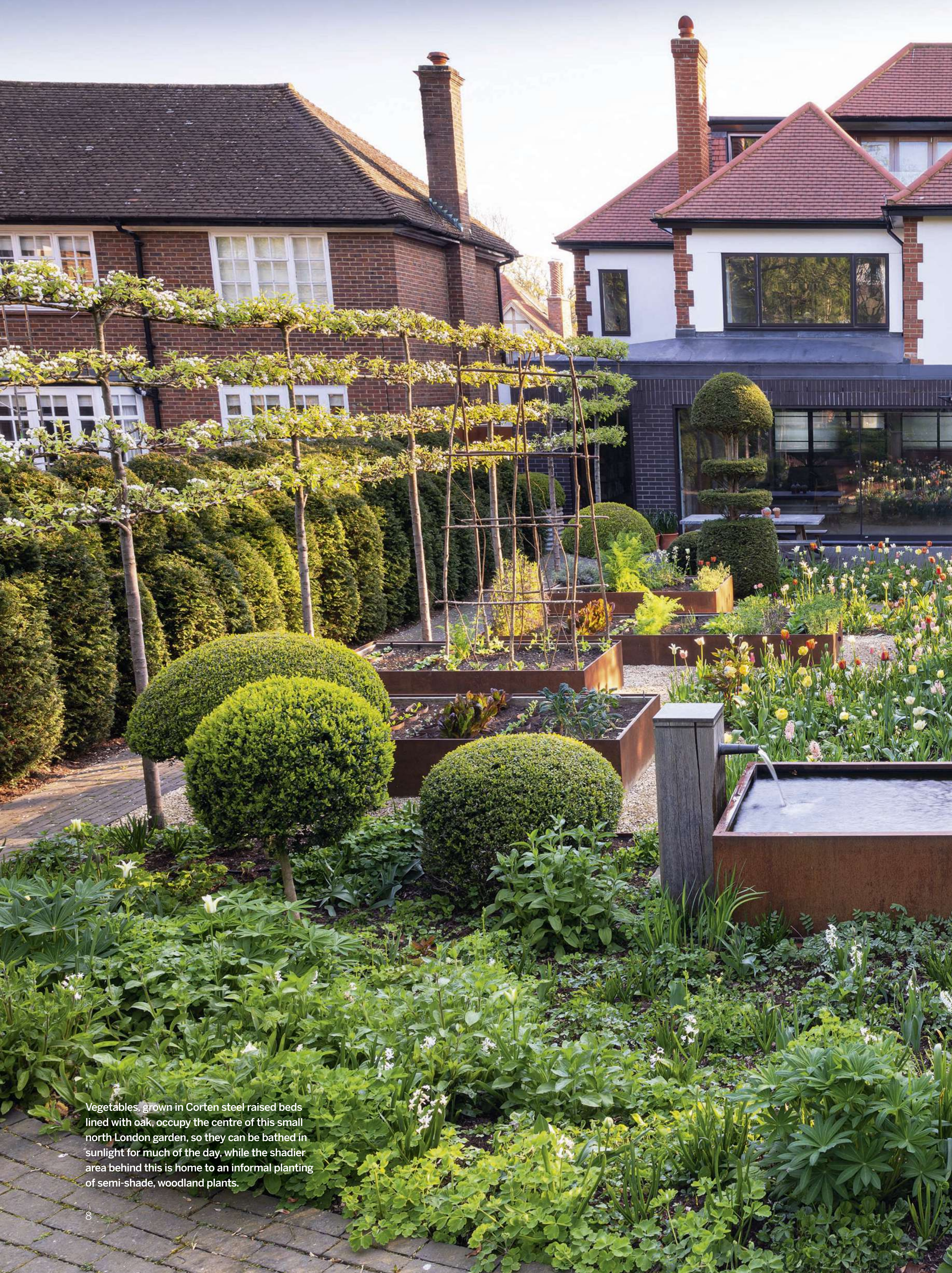
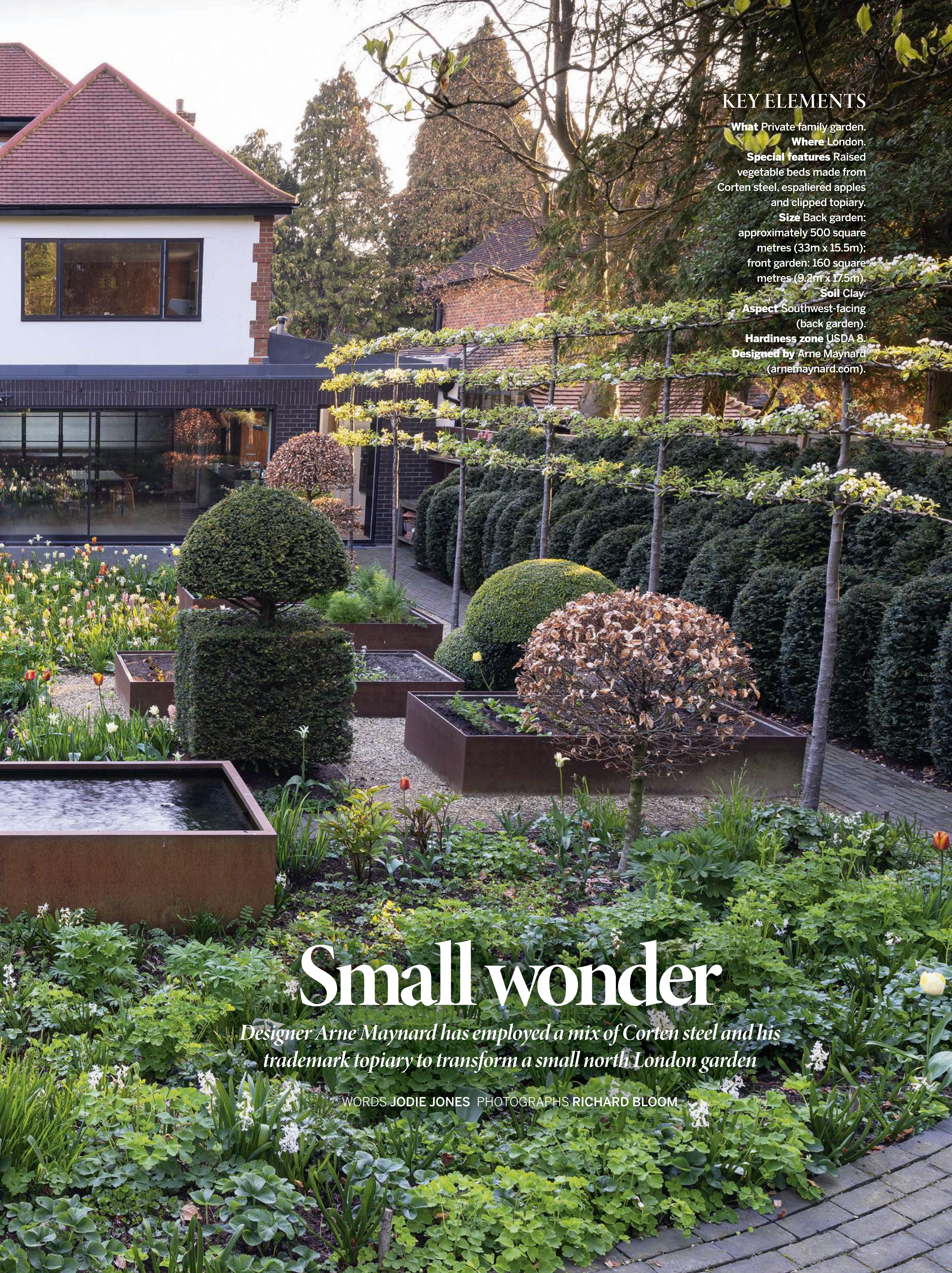
RICHARD BLOOM



Vegetables, grown in Corten steel raised beds lined with oak, occupy the centre of this small north London garden, so they can be bathed in sunlight for much of the day, while the shadier area behind this is home to an informal planting of semi-shade, woodland plants.



Small wonder

Designer Arne Maynard has employed a mix of Corten steel and his trademark topiary to transform a small north London garden

WORDS **JODIE JONES** PHOTOGRAPHS **RICHARD BLOOM**

KEY ELEMENTS

What Private family garden.
Where London.
Special features Raised vegetable beds made from Corten steel, espaliered apples and clipped topiary.
Size Back garden: approximately 500 square metres (33m x 15.5m); front garden: 160 square metres (9.2m x 17.5m).
Soil Clay.
Aspect Southwest-facing (back garden).
Hardiness zone USDA 8.
Designed by Arne Maynard (arnemaynard.com).

Exquisitely clipped topiary pieces, espaliered fruit trees and well-judged, ornamental planting are vintage Arne Maynard. Yet at the heart of his design for Michael and Susan's north London garden are a series of raised beds for biodynamic vegetables.

Susan is a half-Japanese homoeopath with a passion for kitchen gardening and Michael is a native north Londoner. The brief the couple gave to Arne was a short film of the American children's author and illustrator Tasha Tudor in her Vermont cottage garden. It is hard to imagine a more potent mix of cultural influences, and it has resulted in an exceptional garden. The overall impression is of a crisply contemporary city space that complements a radical interior redesign.

In 2015 the couple moved from central London to an Arts and Crafts-style house at the northerly end of the London Underground network, in a quiet street close to the one where Michael grew up. "We wanted a family home for our daughter," says Michael. "I was comfortable managing the construction side of the job, but I didn't know where to start with the garden. In fact, we didn't realise just how important the view of the garden would be until we removed the back of the house and replaced it with a glass-sided extension." By the time Arne first visited the house, the interior had been scooped out and finished in a minimalist style that made the garden the main decorative element of the family living space. "I could immediately see its potential," he says. "Every garden I create is a reflection of the place, the house and the people, and this was no different.

"Because of the large rear windows, this is an inside-outside garden. The house has black brick fireplaces, so we used the same brick out on the terrace. We needed raised beds for vegetables, but oak would have been too rustic so we made them from Corten steel, although they are lined in oak according to biodynamic principles, so the soil doesn't come into contact with metal. Overall, the garden needed enough structure to hold its own throughout the year, while the softer planted elements ebb and flow to mark the passing of the seasons."

Inevitably, there were practical issues to address, as well as aesthetic ones. "City gardens are really complicated," says Arne. "It is so much easier to make a big country garden." The ground sloped up towards its rear boundary and was overwhelmed by a number of large trees. The soil was poor quality and free draining in the higher sections, while the lower part was prone to waterlogging, and although Susan and Michael had set their hearts on an orchard, the aspect was simply not suitable.

Arne solved this with the simple idea of planting it in the front garden instead. Consequently the in-and-out driveway is bordered by gooseberry and currant bushes, as well as clipped yew domes, alchemillas and linarias, and privacy is provided by a stilt hedge of espaliered apples.

To the rear of the house, one large tree was removed, land drains were laid and the soil was extensively improved to give the carefully chosen plant palette the best start in life.

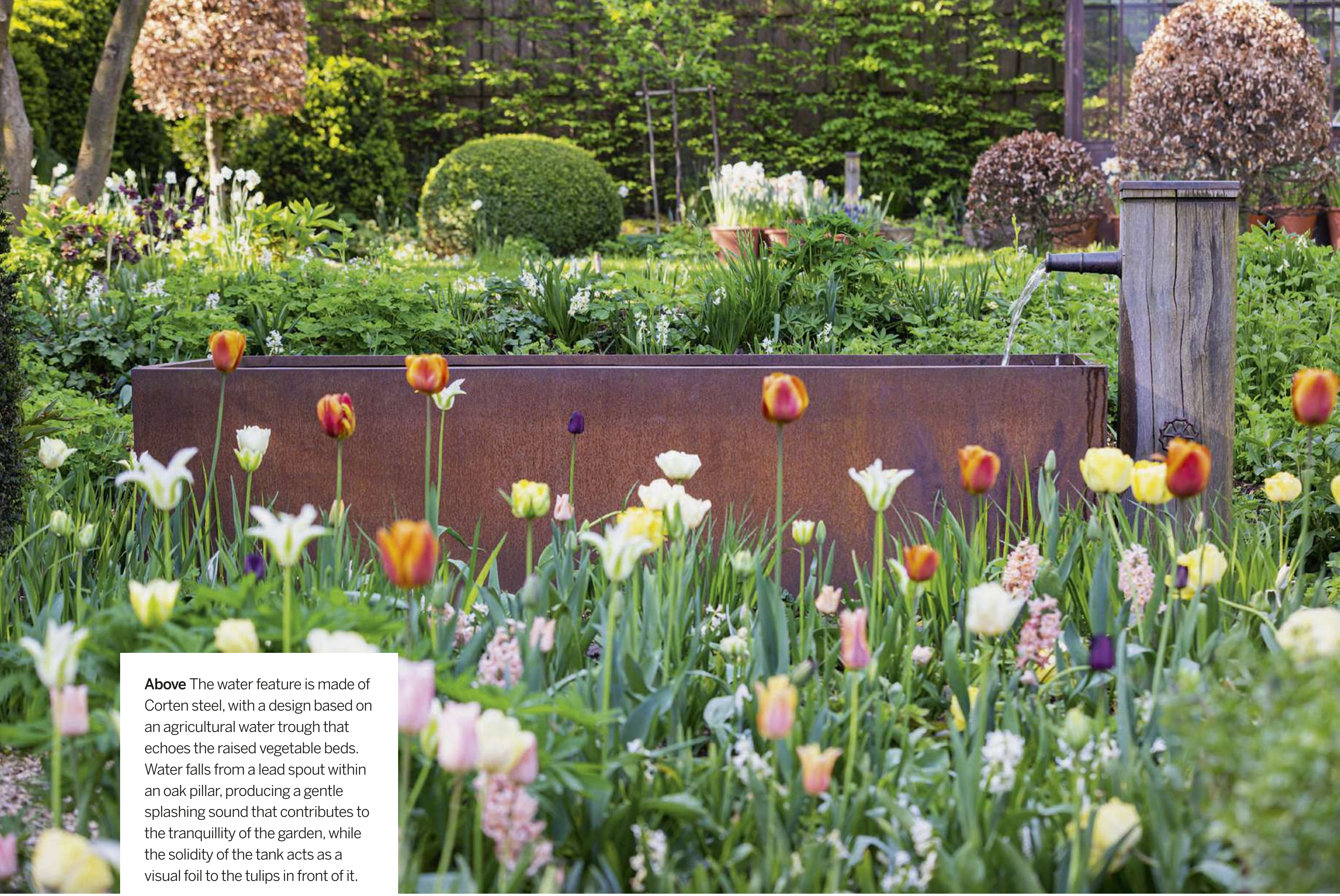
This ornamental planting is layered up seasonally, starting with a groundcover of *Viola odorata* and alpine strawberries that protects the soil from winter erosion. This soon disappears under a tapestry of tulips and other spring bulbs, carefully orchestrated to fill the garden with flowers from late March through to May, by which time *Paeonia* 'Starlight' is in full flower, along with palest lavender-coloured *Iris* 'Berliner Overture' and the long-flowering astrantias 'Buckland' and 'Roma'. Some plants, including witch hazel and lavender, were partially chosen for their homoeopathic benefits. Spires of *Digitalis ferruginea* and *Lupinus* 'Noble Maiden' introduce a vertical accent and the pretty anemones *A*. Dreaming Swan (= 'Macane004') and *A*. Ruffled Swan (= 'Macane007') extend the season well into autumn.

Paths wind up through these flowerbeds to a little meadow at the end of the garden. "This is not a wildflower meadow as such, because that would look too messy at certain times of year, but it is not cut every week so it can get a little shaggy and informal," says Arne.

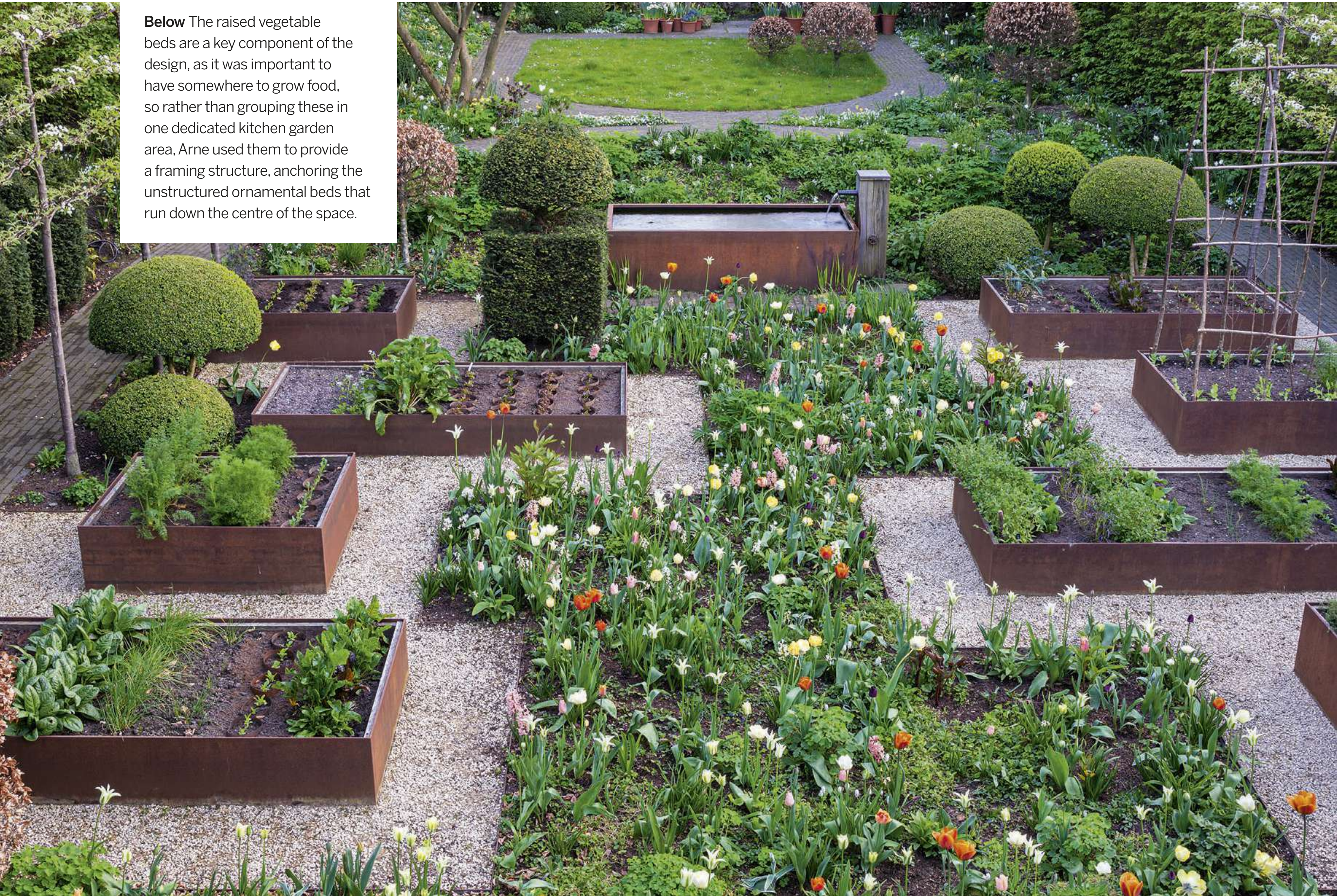
The topiary, in contrast, is carefully maintained and Michael is anticipating the day when the cloud-pruned yew hedges get a little heavier. "We already love the garden, but when this hedge is thicker it will improve the proportions even more." With clients as committed to fine detail as the designer himself, it is no wonder this garden is as good as it is. □

Although the garden is only around 33m long, Arne has created several distinctive areas, including an informal meadow at the far end, and asymmetrically placed raised beds, surrounding beds of soft planting, create several winding paths through the garden, lengthening the journey and making the garden seem larger than it is. Symmetrical rows of formally trained pleached 'Doyenné du Comice' pears add some vertical structure and much-needed privacy, while also adding a sense of enclosure – similar to the feeling of a walled garden.

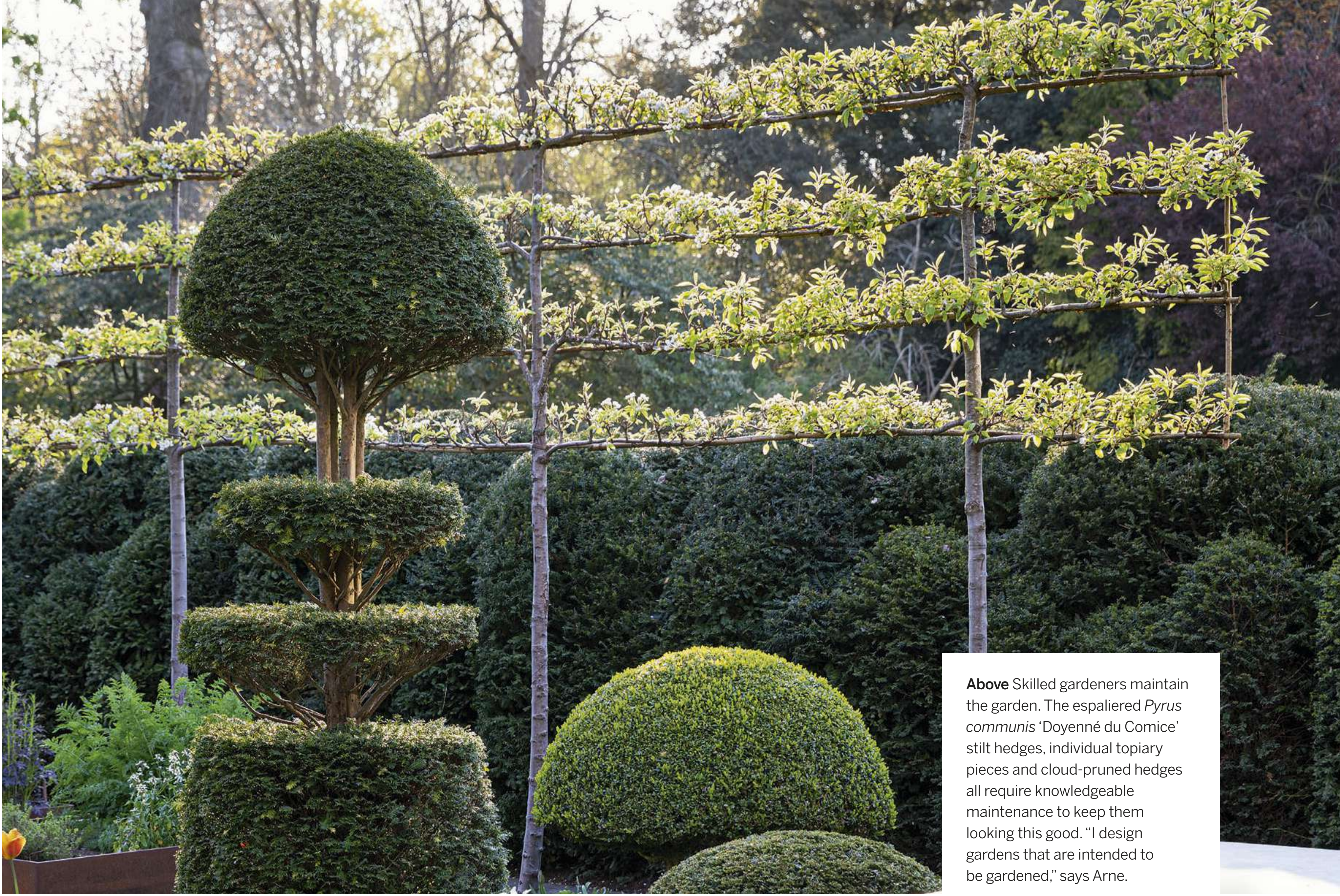
Every garden I create is a reflection of the place, the house and the people

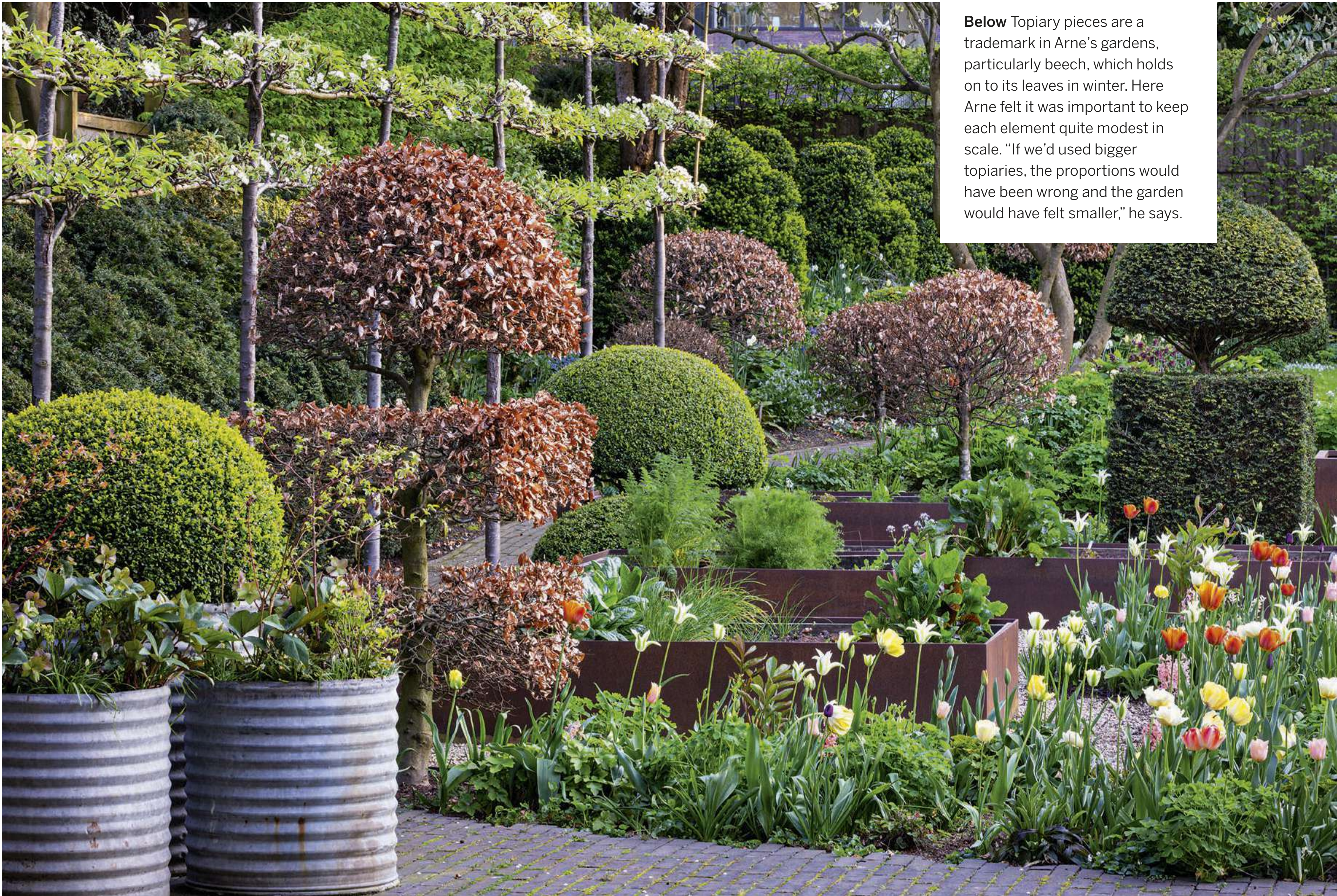


Above The water feature is made of Corten steel, with a design based on an agricultural water trough that echoes the raised vegetable beds. Water falls from a lead spout within an oak pillar, producing a gentle splashing sound that contributes to the tranquillity of the garden, while the solidity of the tank acts as a visual foil to the tulips in front of it.



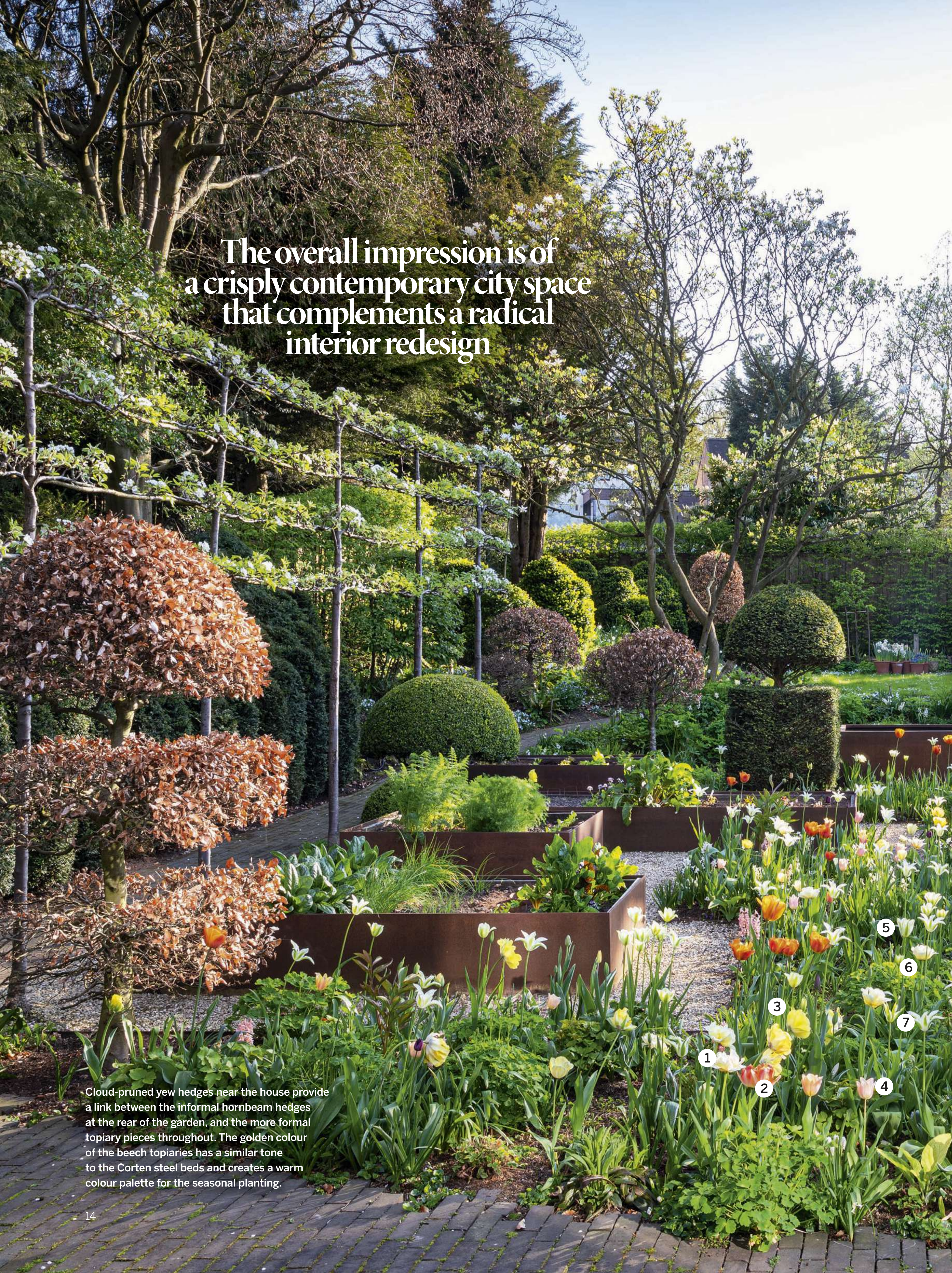
Below The raised vegetable beds are a key component of the design, as it was important to have somewhere to grow food, so rather than grouping these in one dedicated kitchen garden area, Arne used them to provide a framing structure, anchoring the unstructured ornamental beds that run down the centre of the space.





Above Skilled gardeners maintain the garden. The espaliered *Pyrus communis* 'Doyenné du Comice' stilt hedges, individual topiary pieces and cloud-pruned hedges all require knowledgeable maintenance to keep them looking this good. "I design gardens that are intended to be gardened," says Arne.

Below Topiary pieces are a trademark in Arne's gardens, particularly beech, which holds on to its leaves in winter. Here Arne felt it was important to keep each element quite modest in scale. "If we'd used bigger topiaries, the proportions would have been wrong and the garden would have felt smaller," he says.



The overall impression is of a crisply contemporary city space that complements a radical interior redesign

Cloud-pruned yew hedges near the house provide a link between the informal hornbeam hedges at the rear of the garden, and the more formal topiary pieces throughout. The golden colour of the beech topiaries has a similar tone to the Corten steel beds and creates a warm colour palette for the seasonal planting.

Key tulips

1 ***Tulipa*** **'Mount Tacoma'** An old cultivar with long-lasting, peony-like, creamy-white flowers that open from pink and green buds. May. 45cm.

2 ***Tulipa*** **'Foxy Foxtrot'** A tulip that starts off lemon yellow before darkening to shades of marmalade orange and peach. April. 40cm.

3 ***Tulipa*** **'Akebono'** Each rich-yellow petal of this cultivar is edged with the finest line of vivid red and flecked with green. The name is Japanese and translates, fittingly, as daybreak. April to May. 50cm.

4 ***Tulipa*** **'Apricot Beauty'** The blooms are a soft salmon pink flushed, as the name suggests, with a touch of warm apricot. Has a light but attractive scent. April. 45cm. AGM*. RHS H6†.

5 ***Tulipa*** **'Spring Green'** An attractive, soft white-and-green, cottage-garden favourite. It is reliably perennial. April to May. 45cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

6 ***Tulipa*** **'Ice Age'** A frilly, flouncy, double cultivar in rich cream with a touch of green on the outer petals. April to May. 50cm.

7 ***Tulipa*** **'Greenstar'** Another white cultivar that stands out for its flashes of fresh green, but the pointed petals of lily-flowered 'Greenstar' arch elegantly out from the centre. April to May. 45cm. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

8 ***Tulipa*** **'Apricot Foxx'** Soft pink-flushed apricot tulip that will intensify in colour following periods of cold weather. April. 45cm.

9 ***Tulipa*** **'Marianne'** An elegant and sculptured fluted tulip with raspberry-pink stripes along orange petals that are yellow inside. April to May. 50cm.

10 ***Tulipa*** **'Golden Artist'** An attractive cultivar with golden-orange petals feathered with green. This is a sport of the 1959 cultivar 'Artist'. May. 45cm.

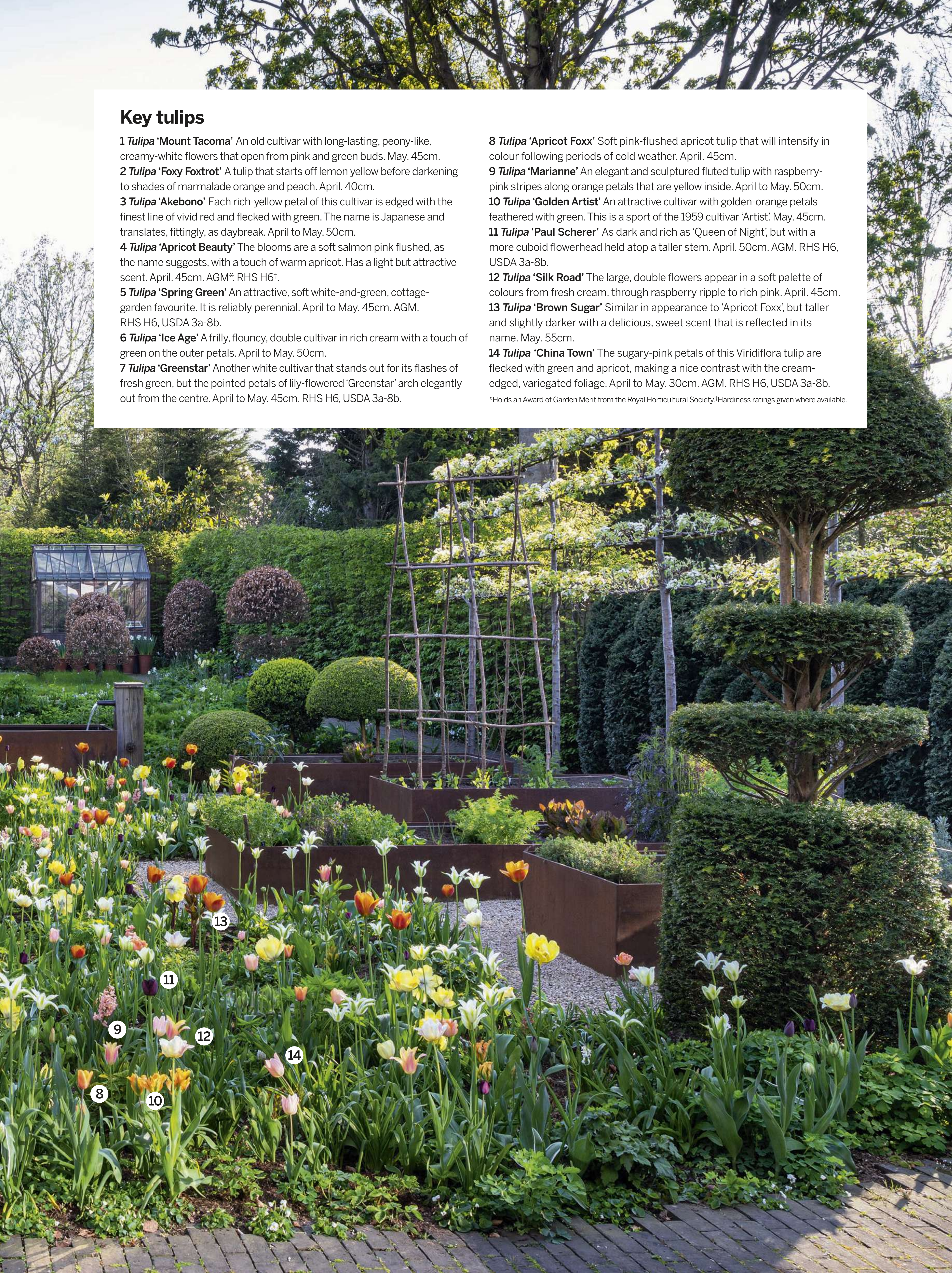
11 ***Tulipa*** **'Paul Scherer'** As dark and rich as 'Queen of Night', but with a more cuboid flowerhead held atop a taller stem. April. 50cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

12 ***Tulipa*** **'Silk Road'** The large, double flowers appear in a soft palette of colours from fresh cream, through raspberry ripple to rich pink. April. 45cm.

13 ***Tulipa*** **'Brown Sugar'** Similar in appearance to 'Apricot Foxx', but taller and slightly darker with a delicious, sweet scent that is reflected in its name. May. 55cm.

14 ***Tulipa*** **'China Town'** The sugary-pink petals of this Viridiflora tulip are flecked with green and apricot, making a nice contrast with the cream-edged, variegated foliage. April to May. 30cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.



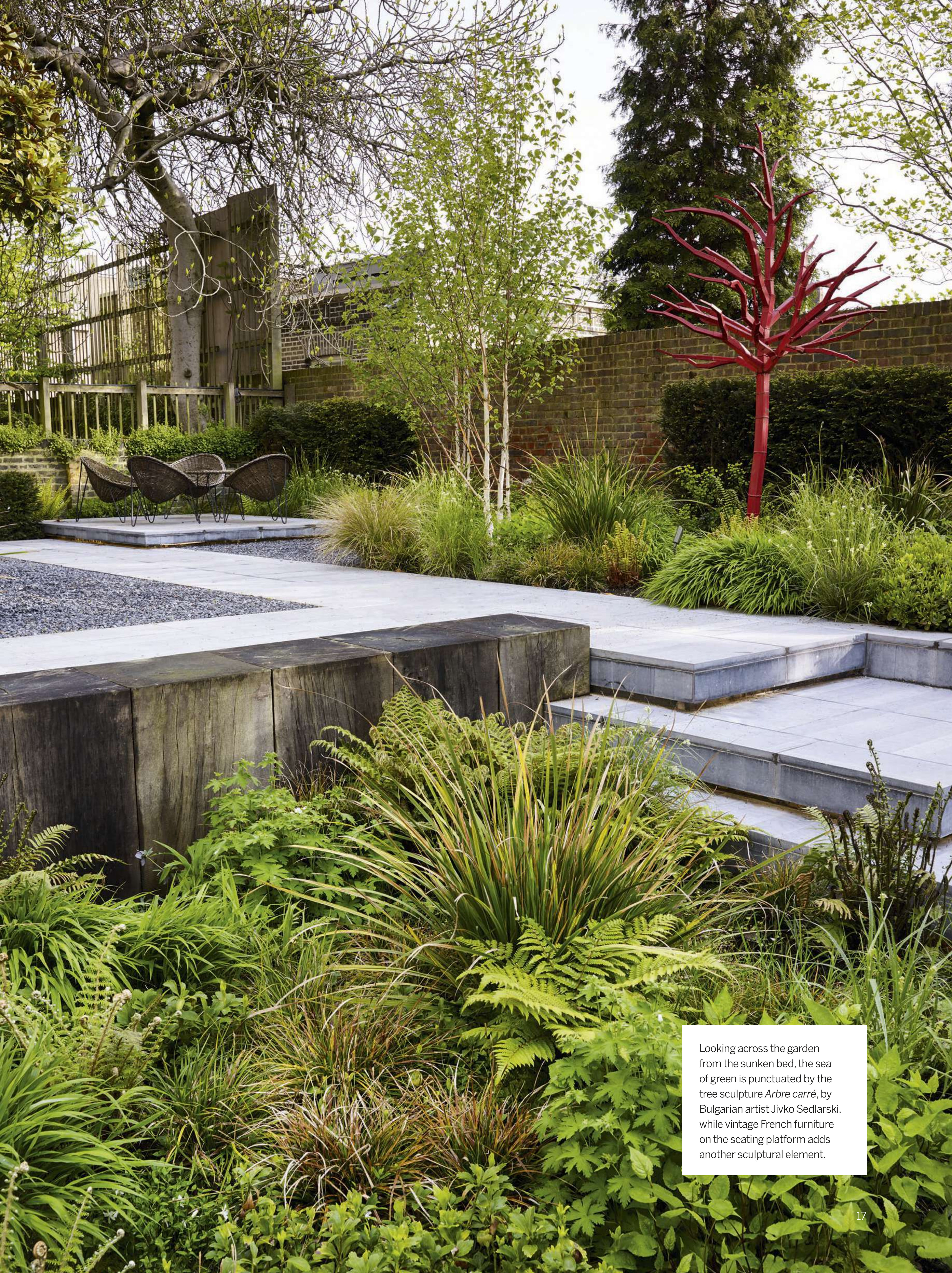
KEY ELEMENTS

What Small walled garden redesigned as a woodland-style space on different levels.
Where London.
Special features Sunken beds and eclectic sculptural forms.
Size 192 square metres (16m x 12m).
Soil Imported mixed loam.
Aspect East-facing.
Hardiness zone USDA 8.
Designed by Chris Moss (chrismossgardens.com).

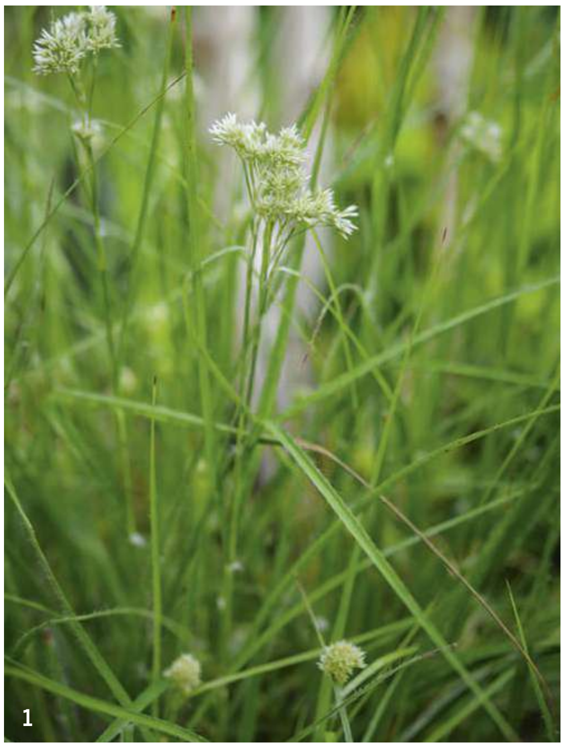
Pools of green

A cool colour palette and dense, textured planting create a woodland feel in this immersive city garden

WORDS **ANNIE GATTI** PHOTOGRAPHS **JASON INGRAM**



Looking across the garden from the sunken bed, the sea of green is punctuated by the tree sculpture *Arbre carré*, by Bulgarian artist Jivko Sedlarski, while vintage French furniture on the seating platform adds another sculptural element.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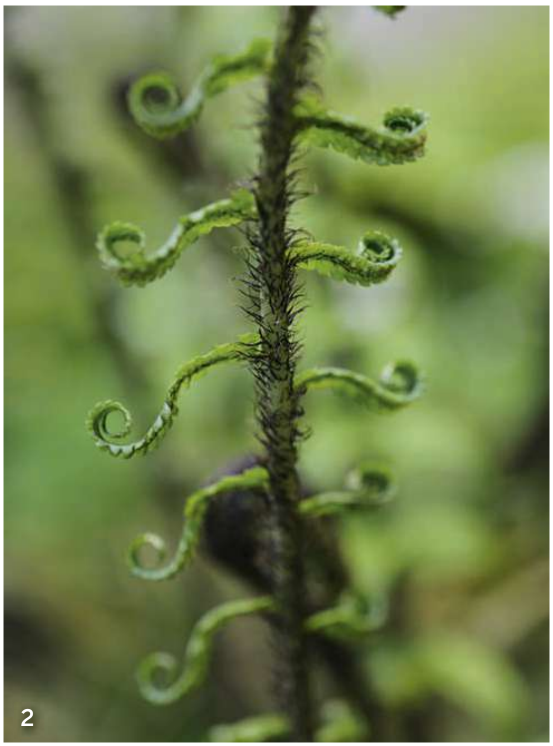
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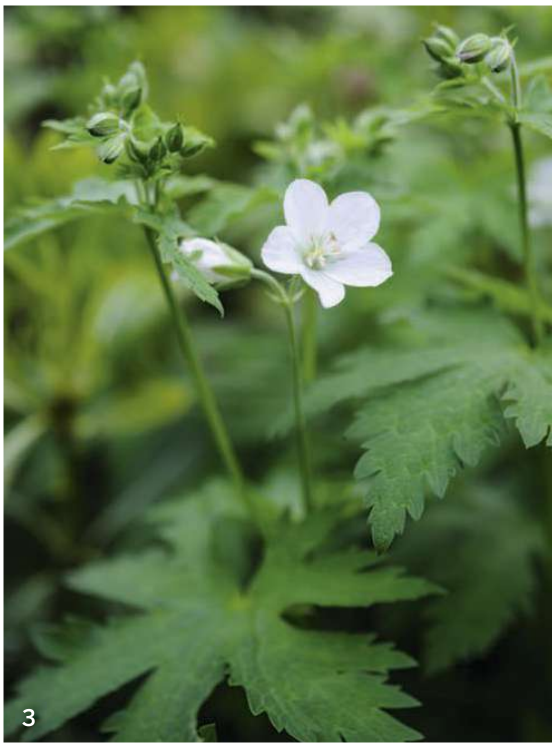
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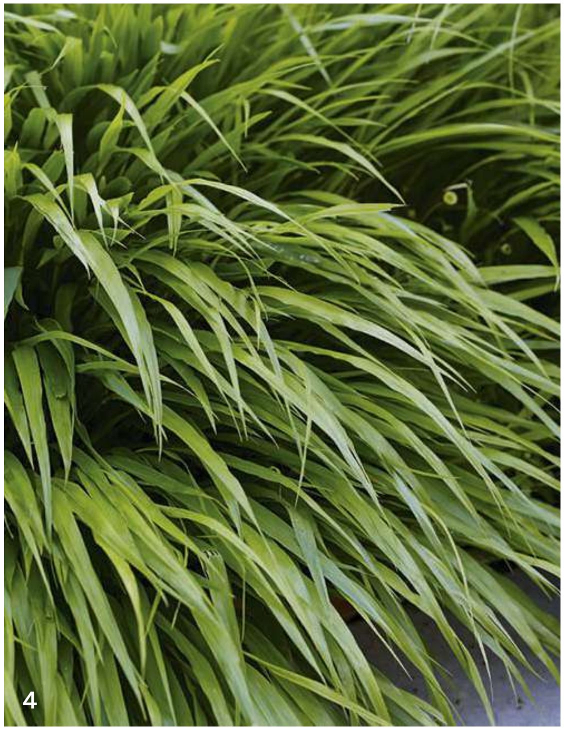
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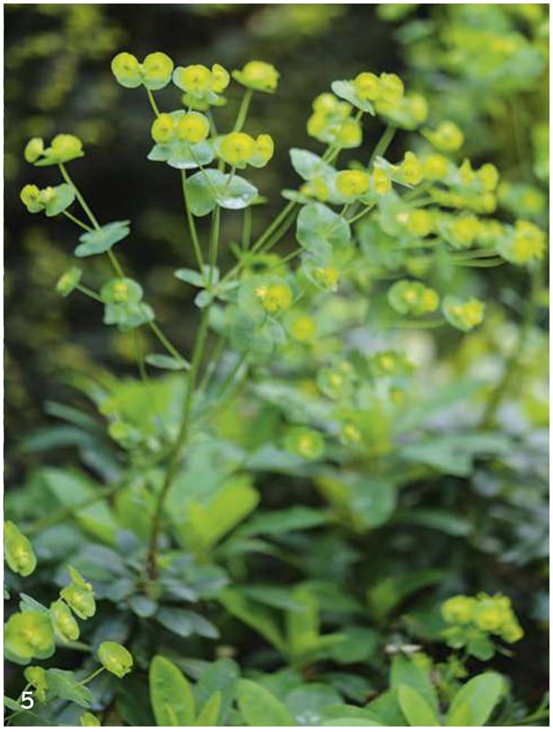
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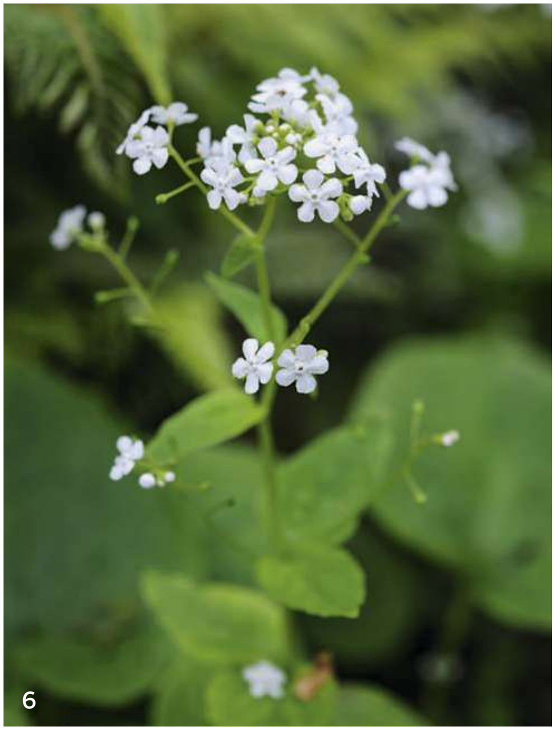
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When an established city garden is stripped out to allow for new underground rooms to be added to the house, there's the chance to make something very different. But for garden designer Chris Moss, who worked closely with architect Sally Mackereth of Studio Mackereth on the renovation of this apartment on the ground floor and basement of what was once a Victorian artist's studio in Chelsea, London, there were restrictions to consider before he could pick up a pencil. More than 70 per cent of the brick-walled plot has a maximum planting depth of 40cm that rather rules out large specimen trees. East facing, it is in the shade of the tall house from midday onwards; three of the existing trees had preservation orders and had to be retained; and there was a 3m-wide light well separating the house from the garden.

To retain a link to the apartment's artistic past, Chris devised a scheme strong in geometric lines and sculptural elements but with a richly textured, calm planting palette, predominantly in shades of green that suggests a woodland edge. Crisply laid Belgian blue limestone paving is used for the causeway that leads into the garden from the kitchen, for the seating area in the sunniest corner, and for the rest of the circulation through the garden, which is divided into a series of densely planted beds. Steps lead up from the causeway to a pathway that cuts a strong horizontal across the garden, dropping down via three steps to a sunken bed overlooked by the sitting room. "I wanted to keep the planting here low, to make it feel like it's flooded with green plants, as if you are looking down on a pool of water," explains Chris. Balustrades were required to create a safety barrier between the garden and the light well and here Chris has added an elegant ▷

12 key plants

1 *Luzula nivea* Clump-forming grass that flowers in spring and softens the planting. 40cm. RHS H5[†].

2 *Dryopteris cycadina* Tall, evergreen fern with black-stemmed fronds. 90cm. AGM*. RHS H4, USDA 5a-8b.

3 *Geranium sylvaticum* 'Album' Grown for its matt, downy leaves and white flowers. 50cm. AGM. RHS H7.

4 *Hakonechloa macra* Semi-evergreen grass with russet tones in autumn. Ideal for softening hard edges. Prefers semi-shade. 50cm. RHS H7.

5 *Euphorbia amygdaloides* var. *robbiae* Spreading evergreen with lime-green flowers in spring. 50cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 6a-8b.

6 *Brunnera macrophylla* 'Betty Bowring' A great groundcover plant with a felty leaf and delicate, white flowers in spring. 40cm. RHS H6.

Key plants continues on page 20

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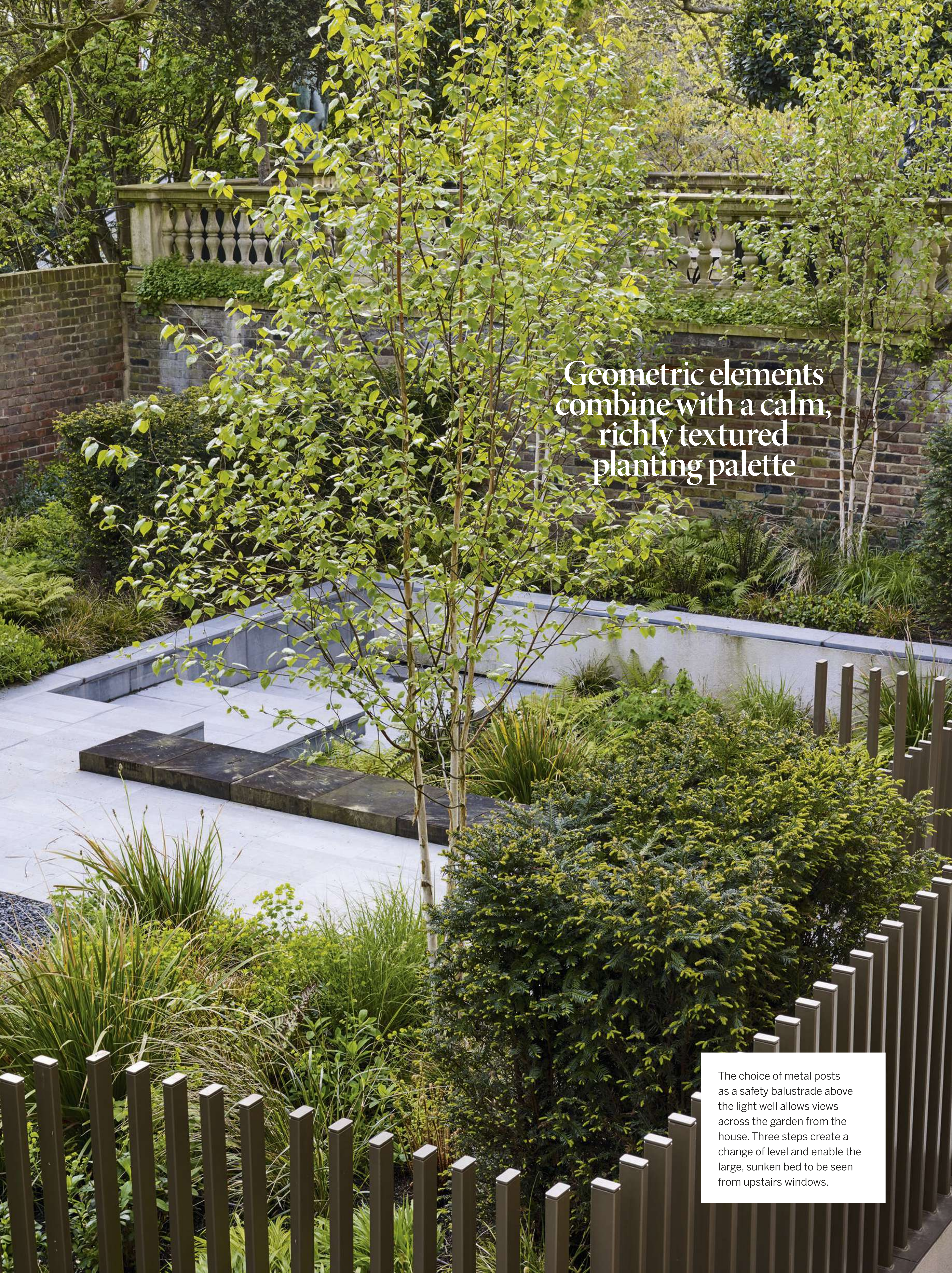
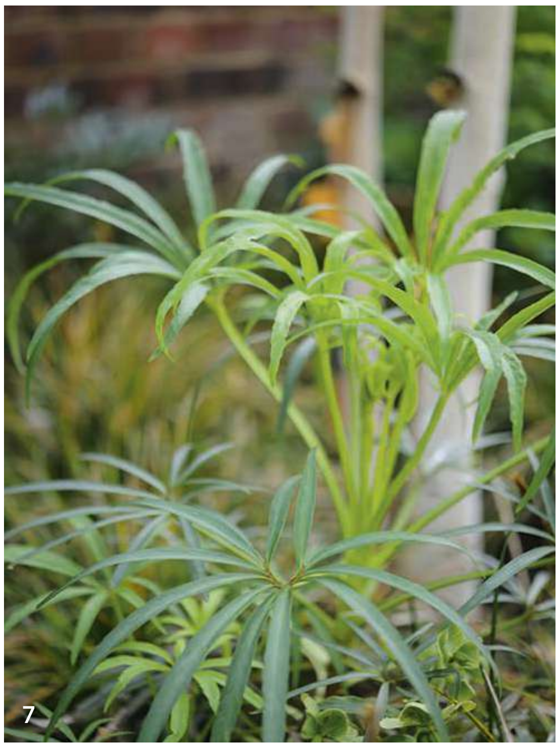
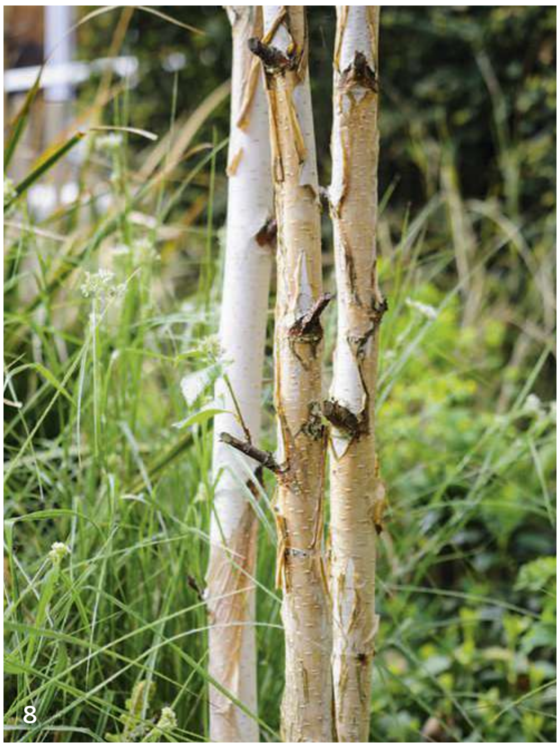
*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. [†]Hardiness ratings given where available.

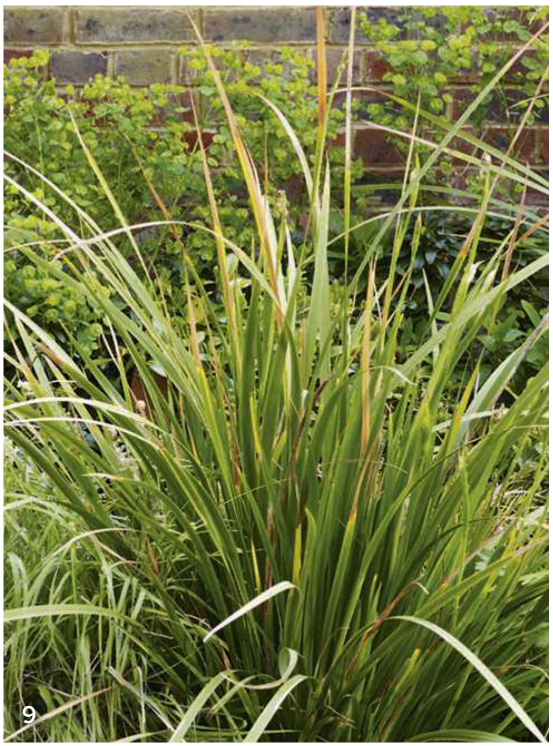


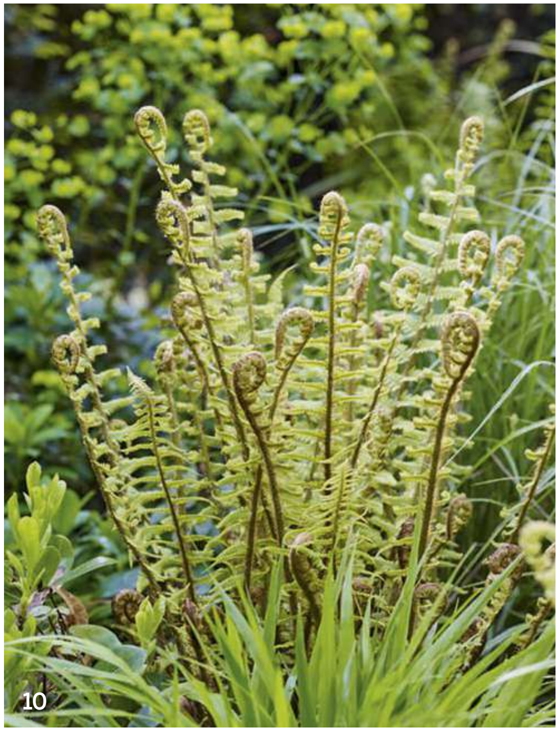
Geometric elements combine with a calm, richly textured planting palette

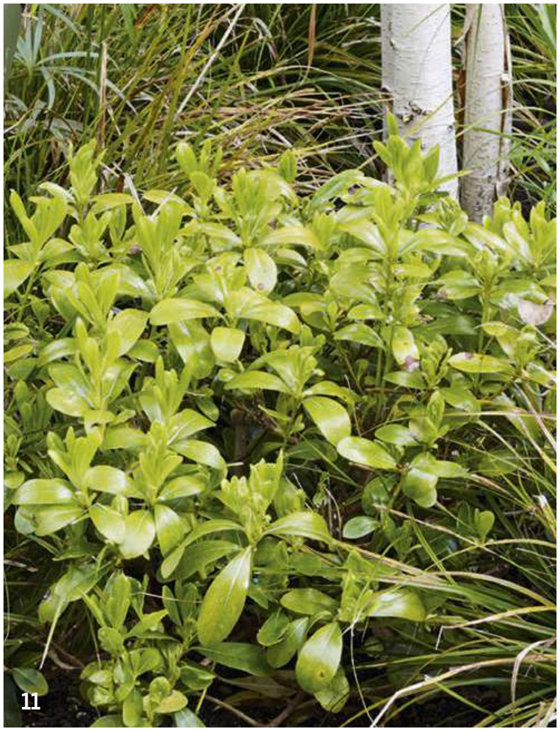
The choice of metal posts as a safety balustrade above the light well allows views across the garden from the house. Three steps create a change of level and enable the large, sunken bed to be seen from upstairs windows.

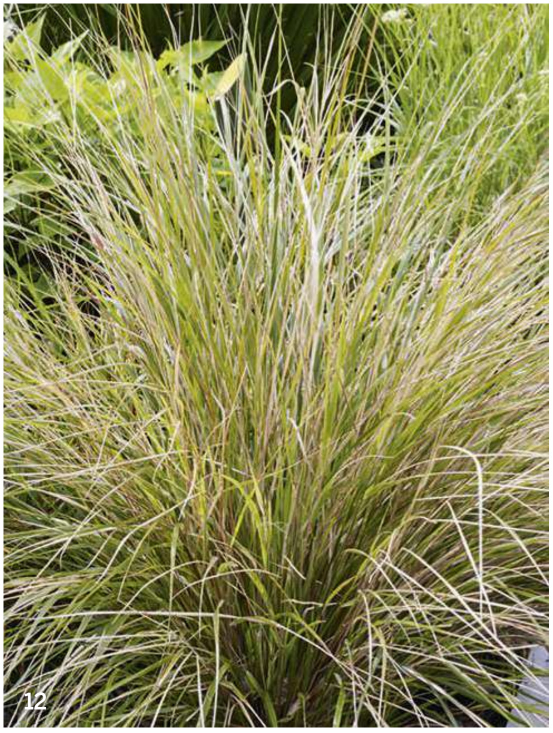












▷ solution in the form of fins of bronze-coated metal posts. "Glass balustrades would have been too harsh. The fins will allow the planting to pop through the gaps." More texture is created by two lines of hefty oak cubes that form a cladding in front of two of the retaining plaster walls that are painted white elsewhere.

By restricting the planting palette to shades of green, with pinpoints of white from early spring until autumn, Chris's design celebrates the textural variety of his chosen plants. With the exception of the multi-stemmed *Betula utilis* subsp. *jacquemontii*, which are omitted from the sunken bed, Chris uses the same mixture of plants in all the beds but in different configurations, depending on location. Groundcover plants include *Pachysandra terminalis* and *Vinca minor* f. *alba* 'Gertrude Jekyll'. Drifts of perennials and grasses, including *Carex oshimensis* 'Evergreen', *Hakonechloa macra*, *Geranium sylvaticum* 'Album', *Luzula nivea* and *Dryopteris* and *Polystichum* ferns, create the next layer, with accent plants such as *Libertia chilensis* (in the sunniest beds) and *Pittosporum tobira* 'Nanum'. Blocks of clipped yew provide a taller layer, creating a dark-green backdrop for the lighter greens and whites and an evergreen structure that holds the garden together in winter. Careful positioning of the striking red, metal tree sculpture by Jivko Sedlarski in front of one of the yew blocks ensures that it catches the eye in all seasons. The garden's other contemporary artwork, an airy wirework of a pair of jellyfish by Benedetta Mori Ubaldini, dangles in the light well and is best seen from the basement bedroom.

The garden has an automatic irrigation system to ensure that the evergreen elements do not dry out. Maintenance is light: yew blocks are clipped twice a year, flowering plants deadheaded and tired winter leaves cut off the ferns. Several years after planting, it has settled into a lush tapestry of greens. □

7 *Helleborus foetidus* Ideal for shade. Its filigree new foliage is a bonus. 60cm. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b.

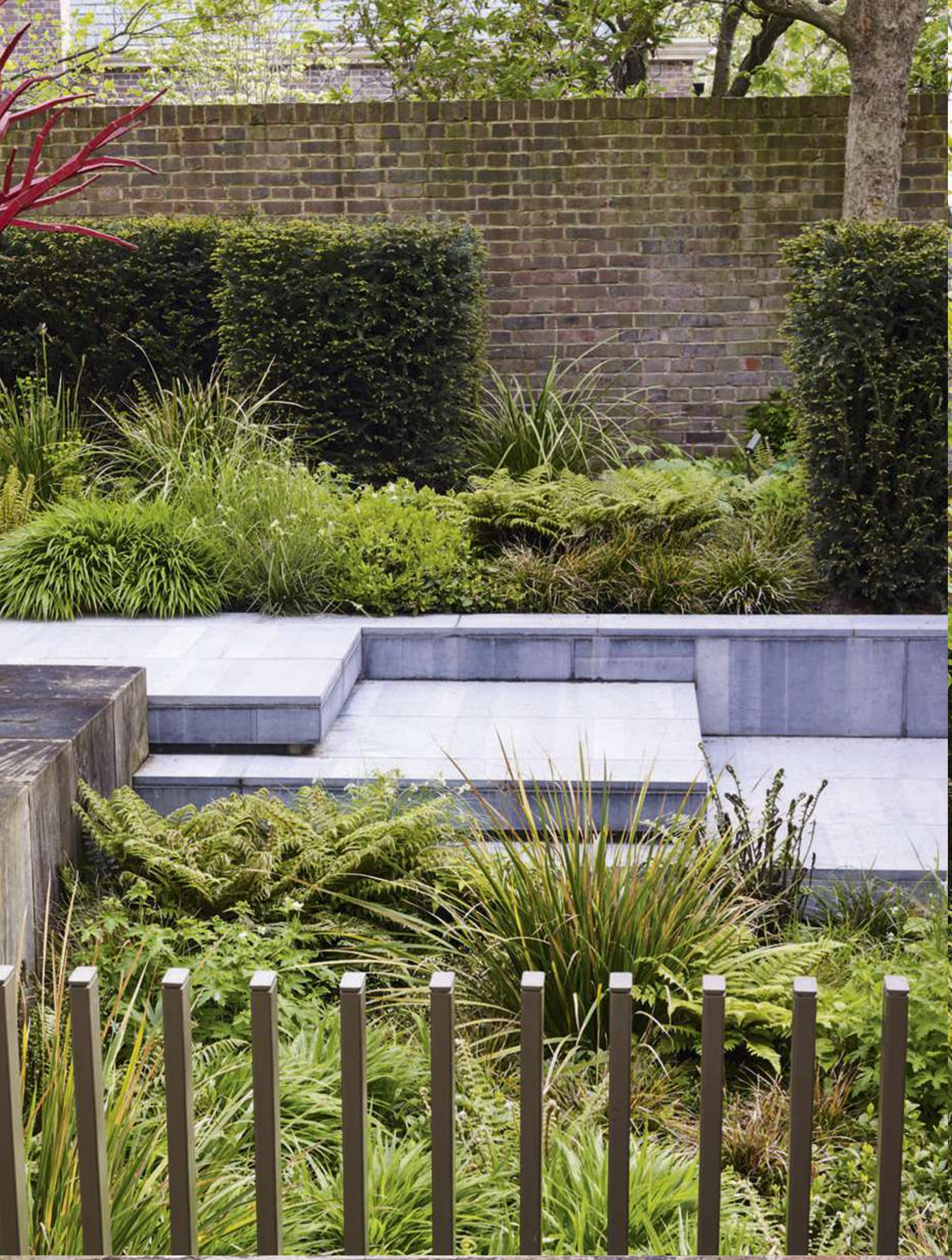
8 *Betula utilis* subsp. *jacquemontii* This multi-stemmed Himalayan birch is ideal for small gardens. Turns golden-yellow in autumn. 6m in 20 years. RHS H7, USDA 5a-6b.

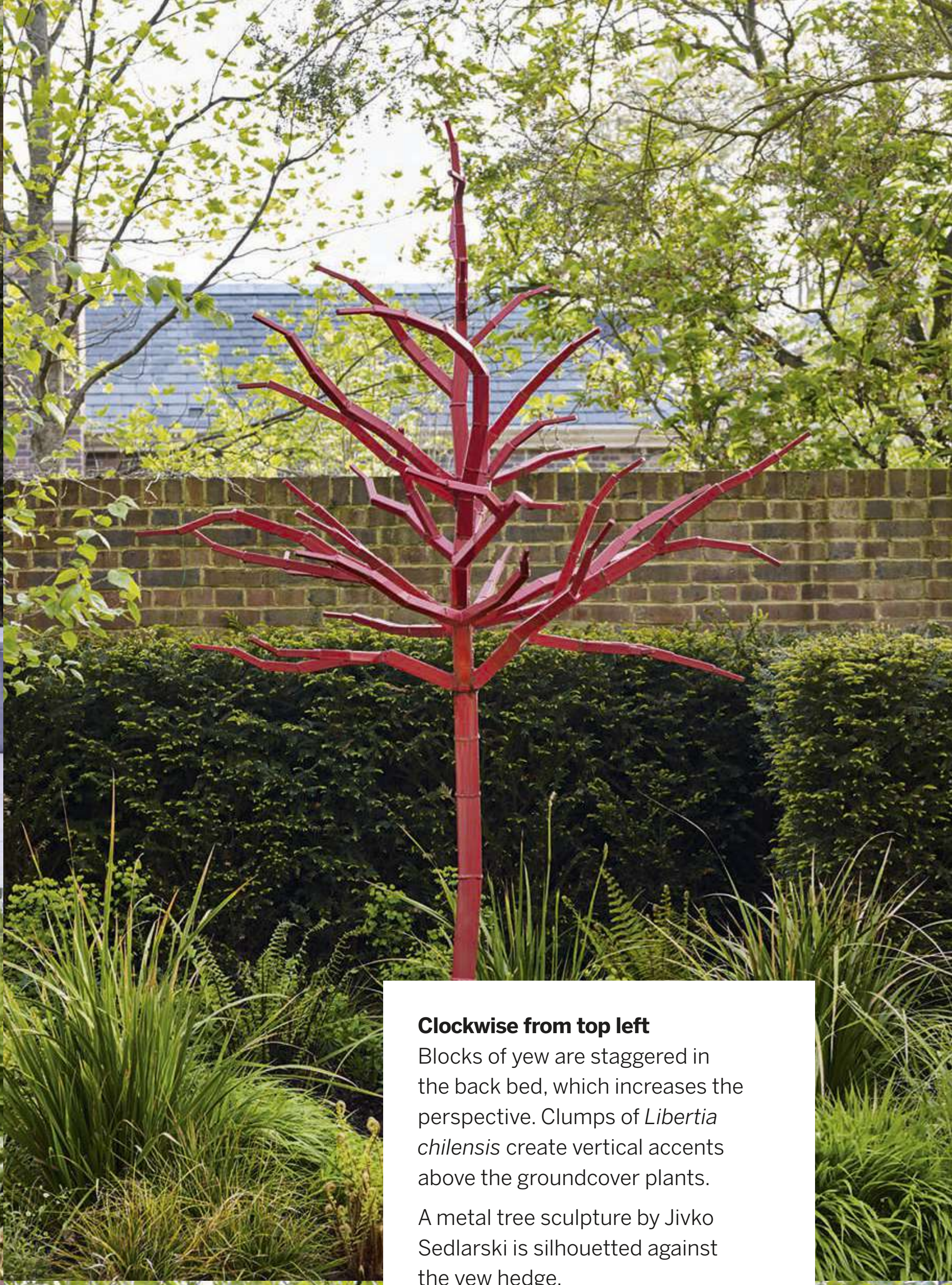
9 *Libertia chilensis* Clump-forming, evergreen perennial with grass-like leaves and white, daisy-like flowers in early summer. 90cm. AGM. RHS H3.

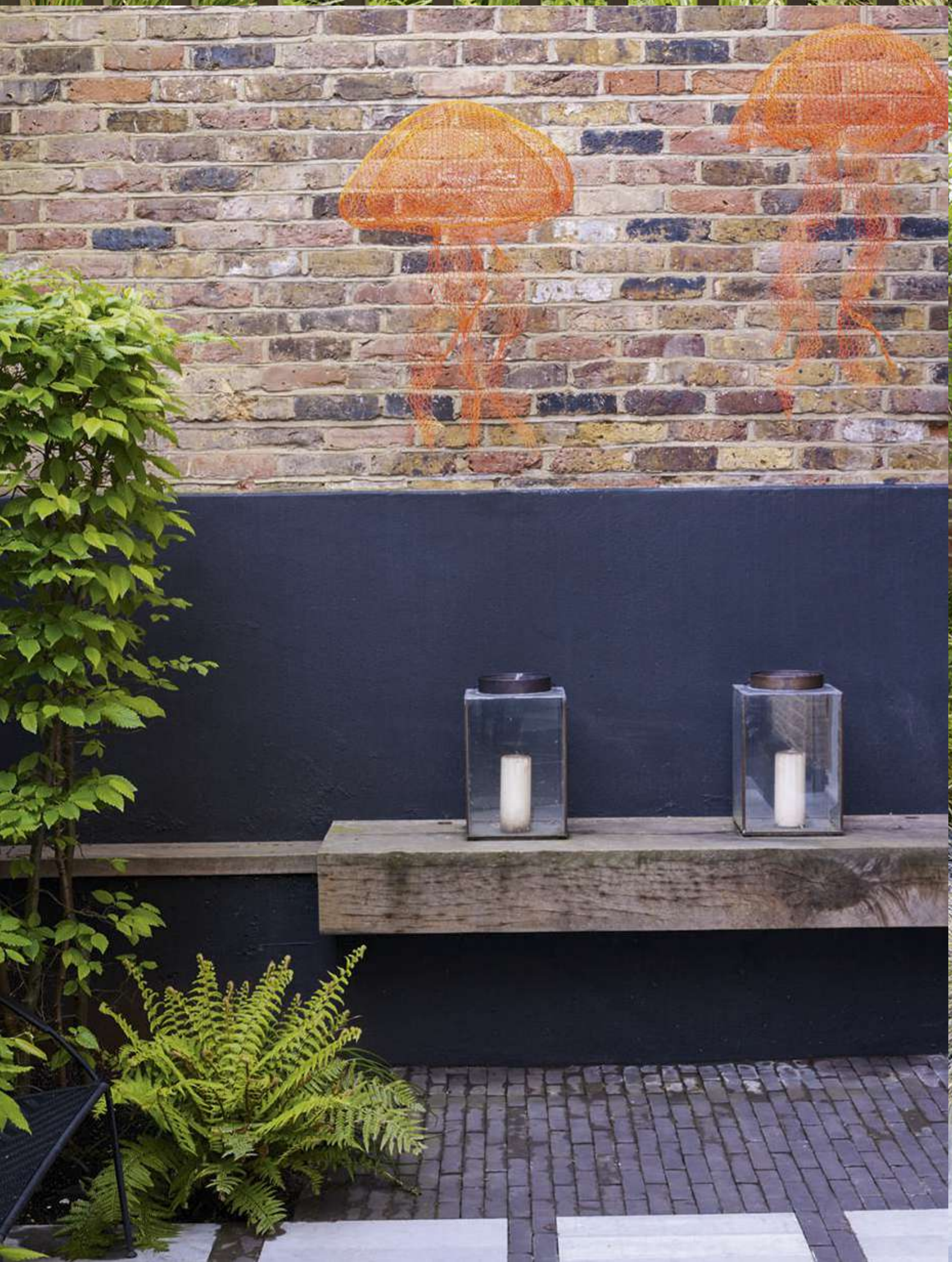
10 *Dryopteris affinis* Semi-evergreen fern with dramatic, yellow-green emerging fronds. 1m. AGM. RHS H5.

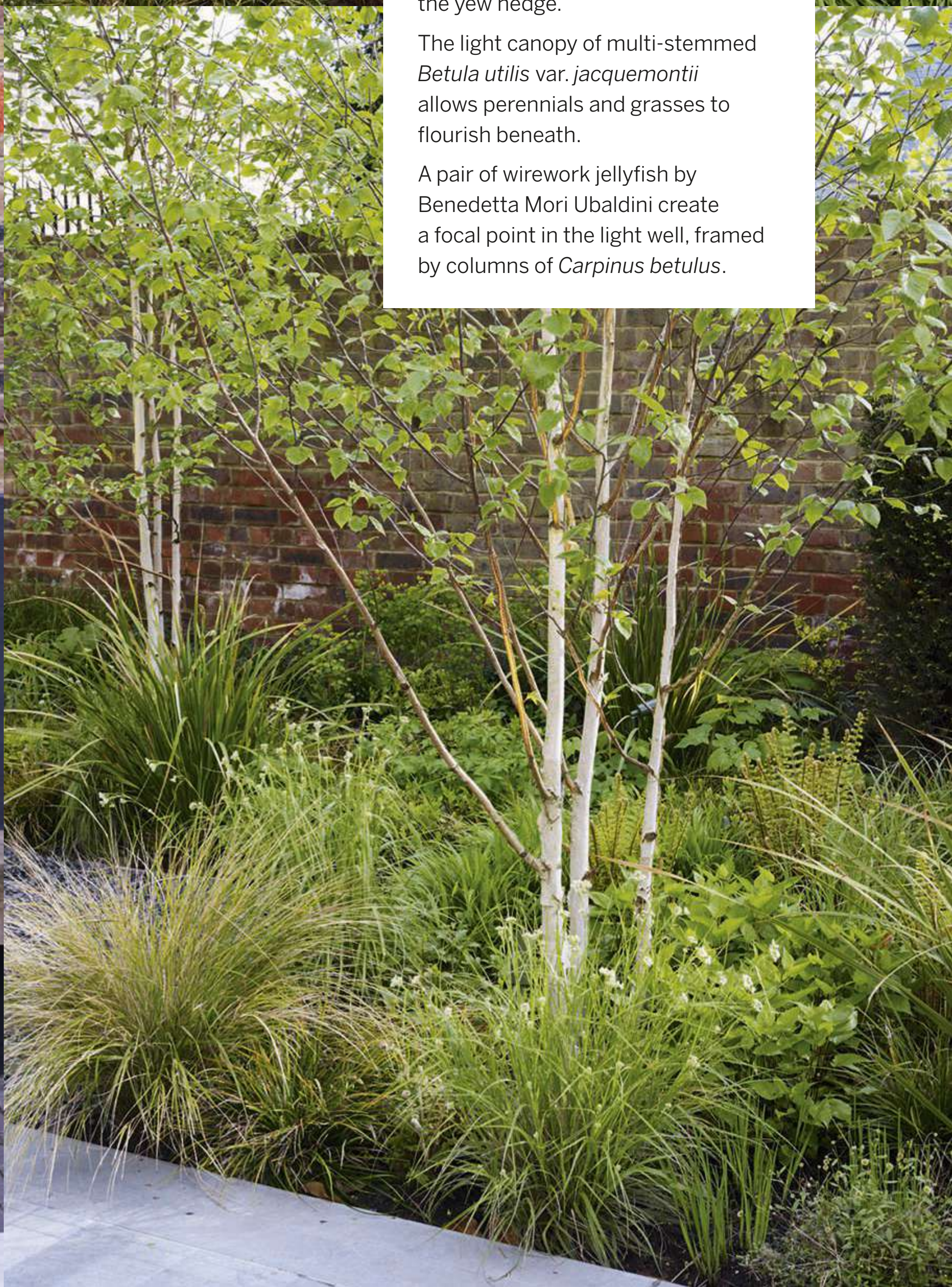
11 *Pittosporum tobira* 'Nanum' Mound-forming dwarf shrub with glossy foliage. Scented white flowers in early summer. 60cm. RHS H3.

12 *Anemanthele lessoniana* A useful grass for tricky spots, such as under trees. The fountain-like clumps of evergreen foliage turn orange-brown in late winter. 1m. AGM. RHS H4.







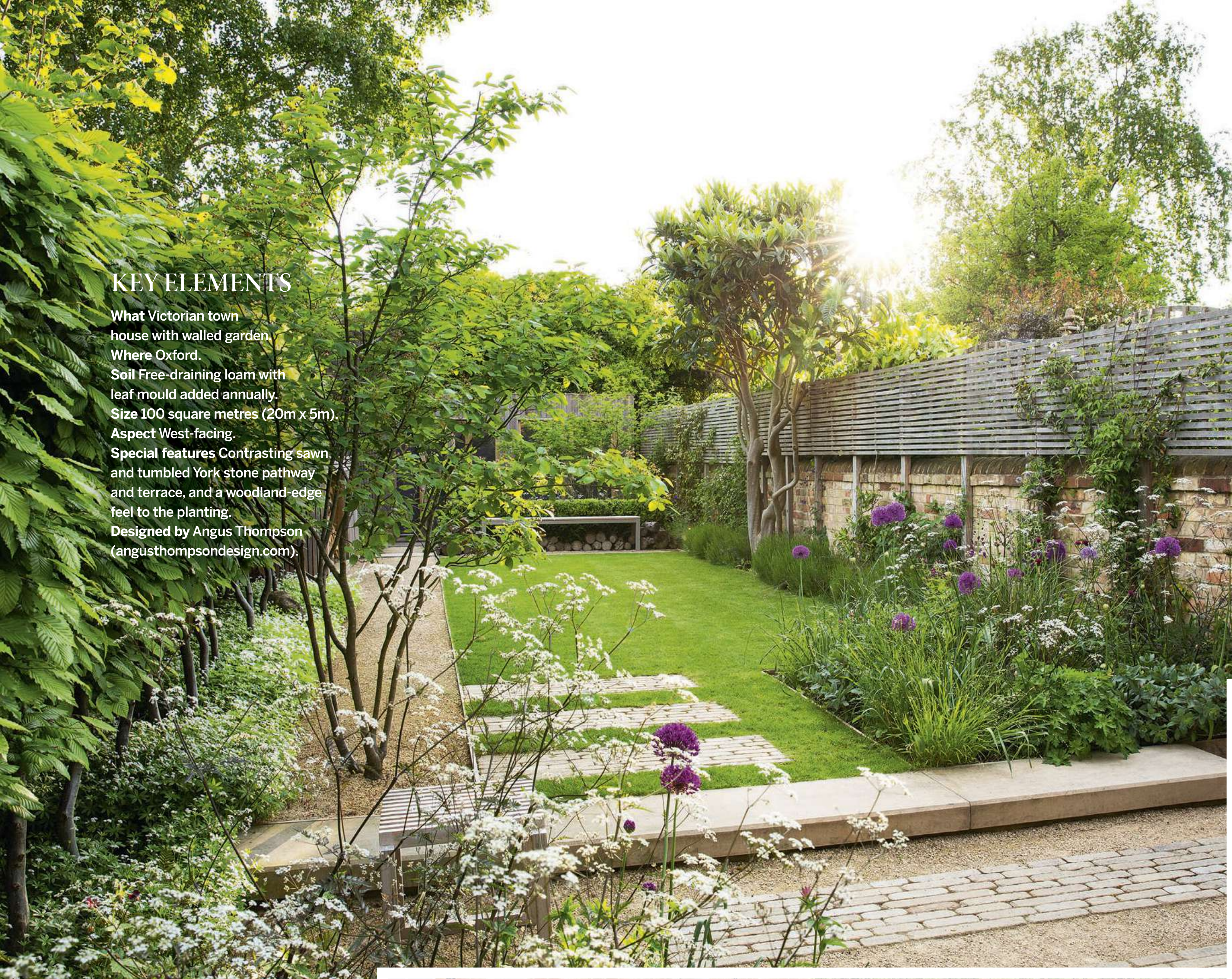


Clockwise from top left
Blocks of yew are staggered in the back bed, which increases the perspective. Clumps of *Libertia chilensis* create vertical accents above the groundcover plants.

A metal tree sculpture by Jivko Sedlarski is silhouetted against the yew hedge.

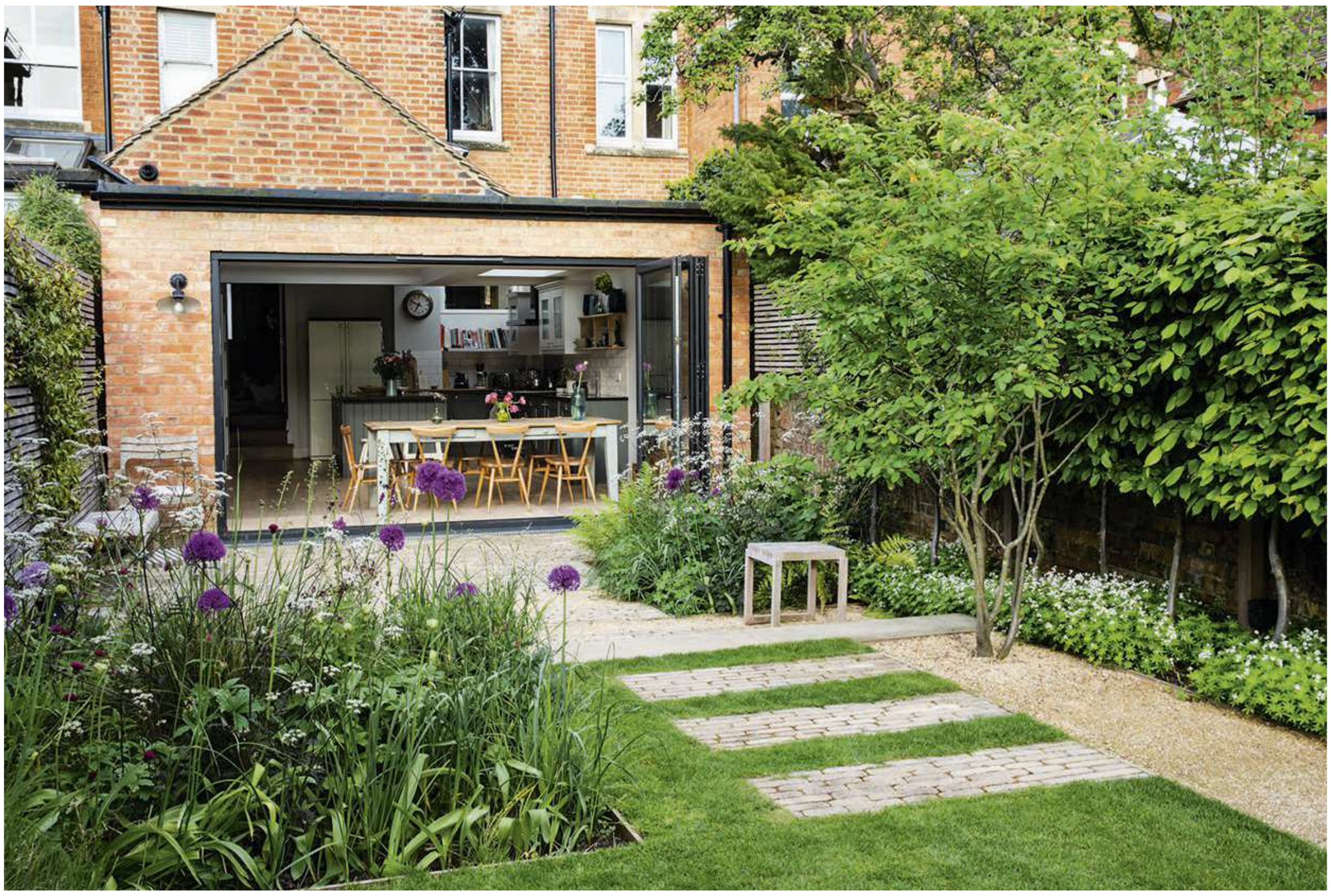
The light canopy of multi-stemmed *Betula utilis* var. *jacquemontii* allows perennials and grasses to flourish beneath.

A pair of wirework jellyfish by Benedetta Mori Ubaldini create a focal point in the light well, framed by columns of *Carpinus betulus*.



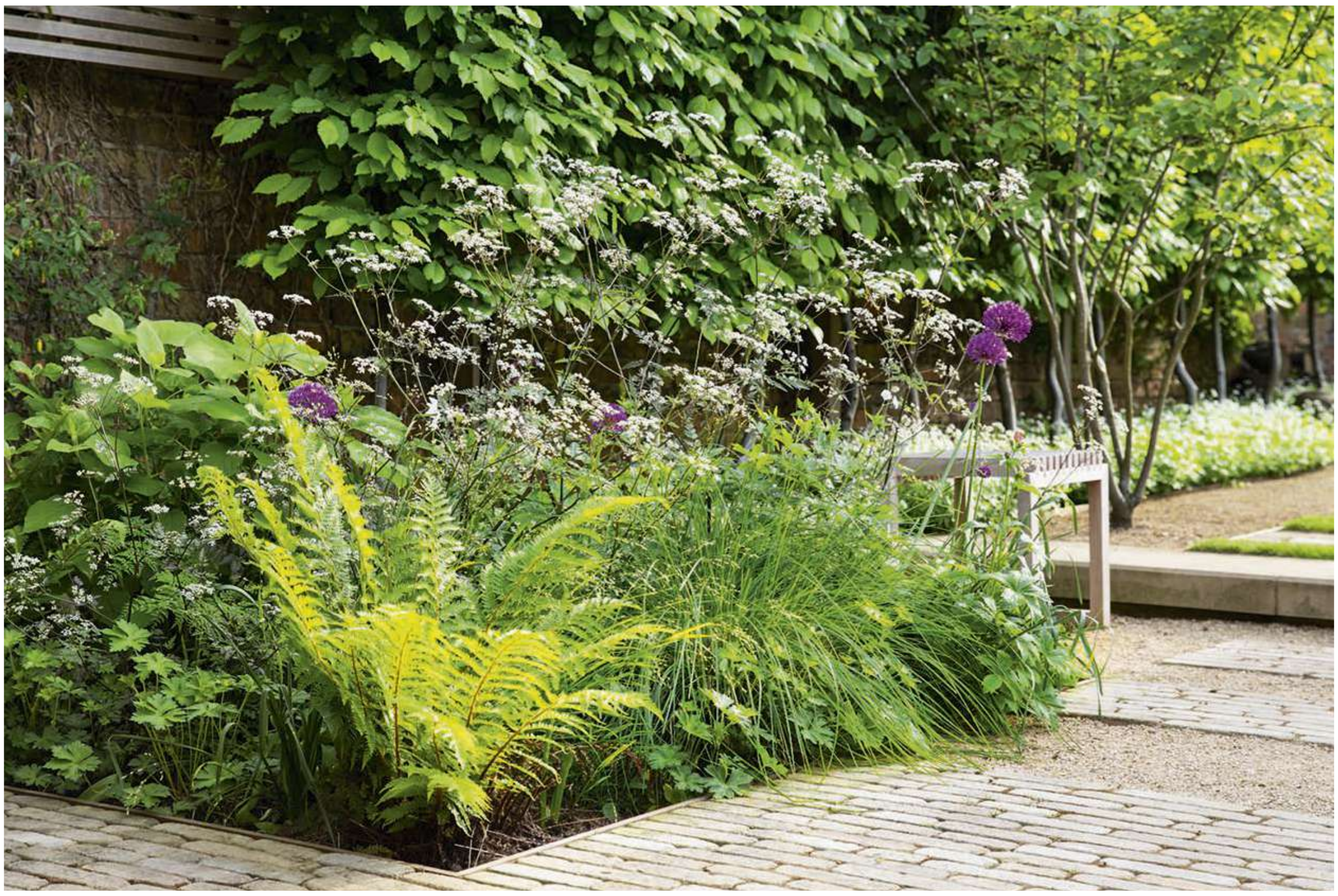
KEY ELEMENTS

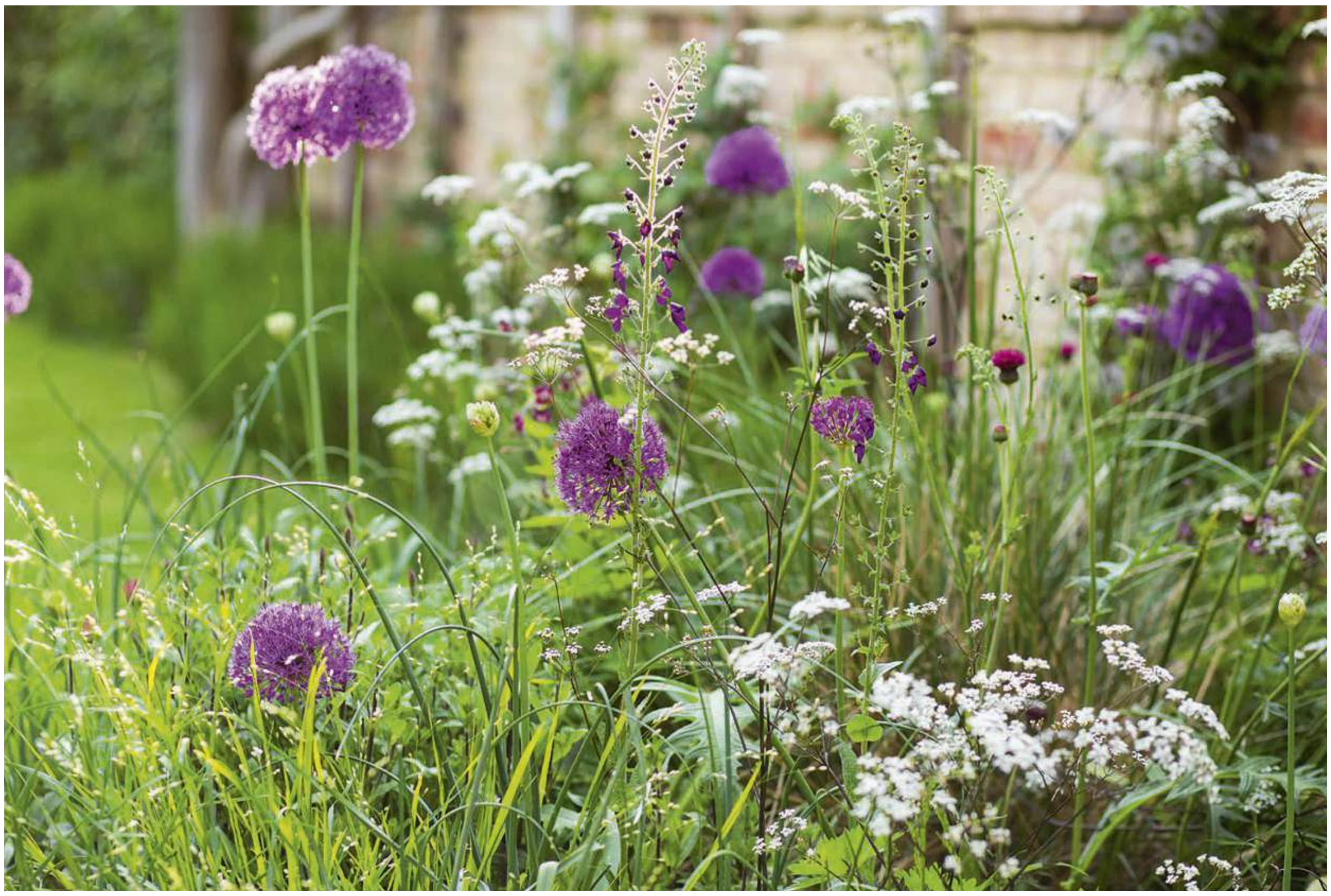
What Victorian town house with walled garden.
Where Oxford.
Soil Free-draining loam with leaf mould added annually.
Size 100 square metres (20m x 5m).
Aspect West-facing.
Special features Contrasting sawn and tumbled York stone pathway and terrace, and a woodland-edge feel to the planting.
Designed by Angus Thompson (angusthompsondesign.com).



Above Designer Angus Thompson avoided the long garden feeling like a runway through zoning. The step up to the lawn provides a transition, while the offset areas of planting provide a veil allowing glimpses of the rest of the garden.

Right Angus chose materials sympathetic to the Victorian house with honey-coloured York stone used both in cut form and as tumbled setts. These give a contemporary appeal but will also age nicely to add to the patina of the garden.





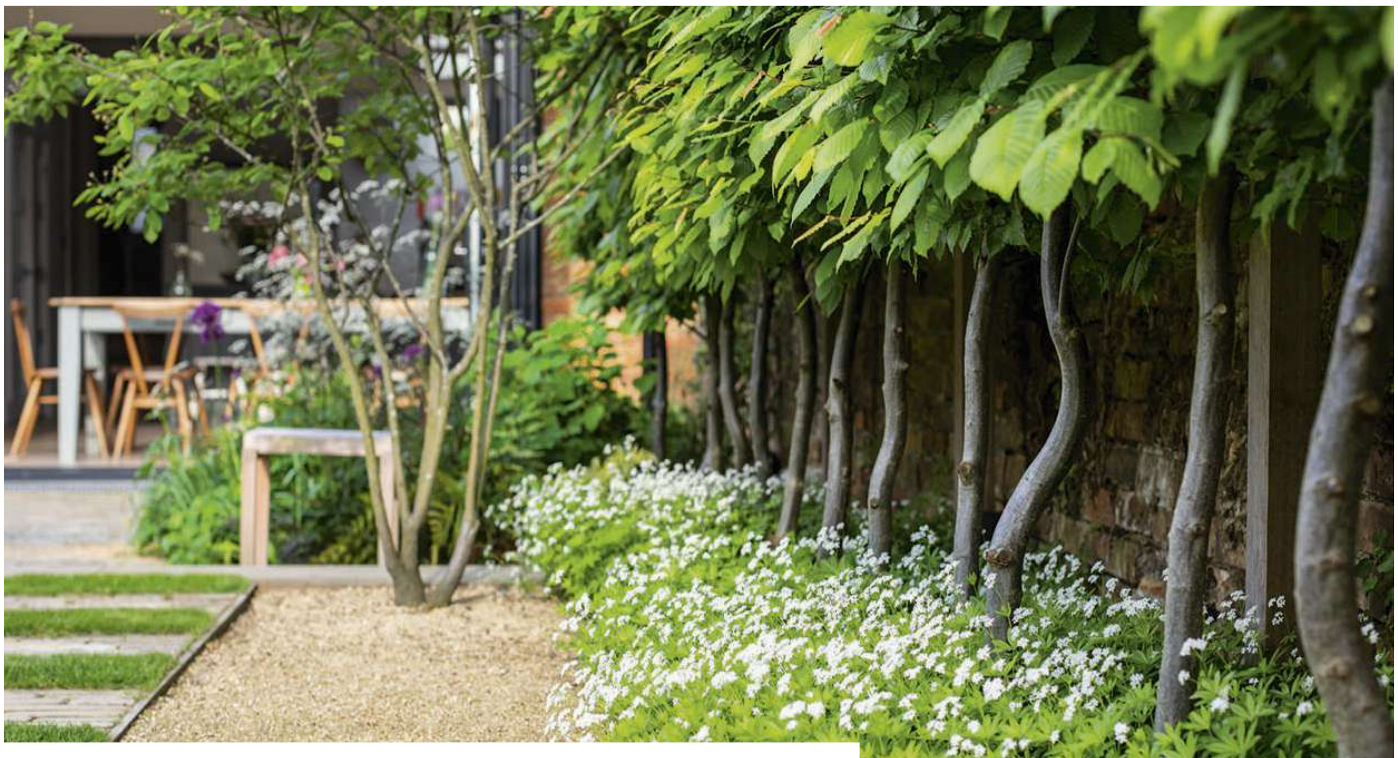
Above Owner Eve Chase loves the fresh spring appeal of a hedgerow. To achieve that here in the garden, signature plants include *Anthriscus sylvestris* 'Ravenswing', with its frothy, white flowers and dark-purple stems, and the fern *Dryopteris erythrosora*.

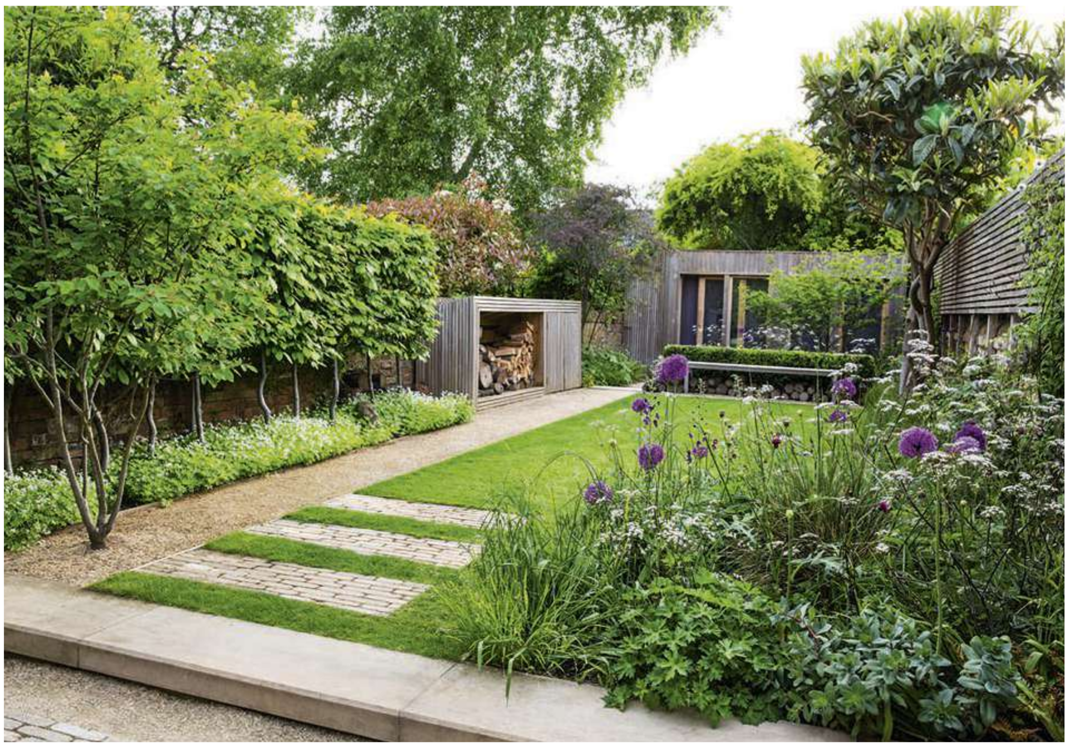
Left A naturalised mix of planting with *Allium hollandicum* 'Purple Sensation' providing the colour theme, picked up by *Verbascum phoeniceum* 'Violetta' and *Cirsium rivulare* 'Atropurpureum'. The scheme is bound together by the grass *Melica altissima* and more anthriscus.

Sense of space

Adding character to a small garden is all about careful structure and considered planting – with elements of surprise and intrigue along the way

WORDS SORREL EVERTON PHOTOGRAPHS RACHEL WARNE

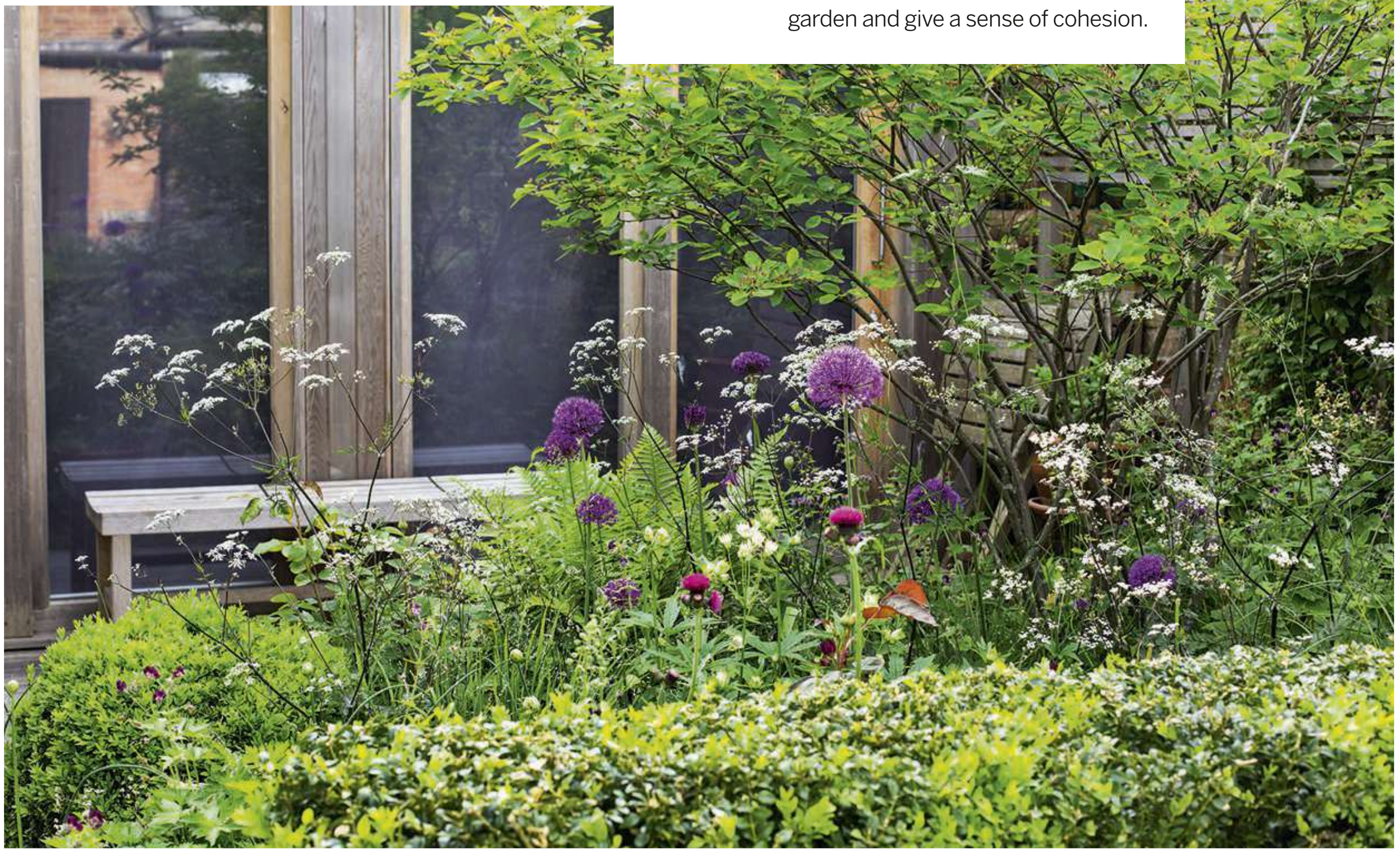


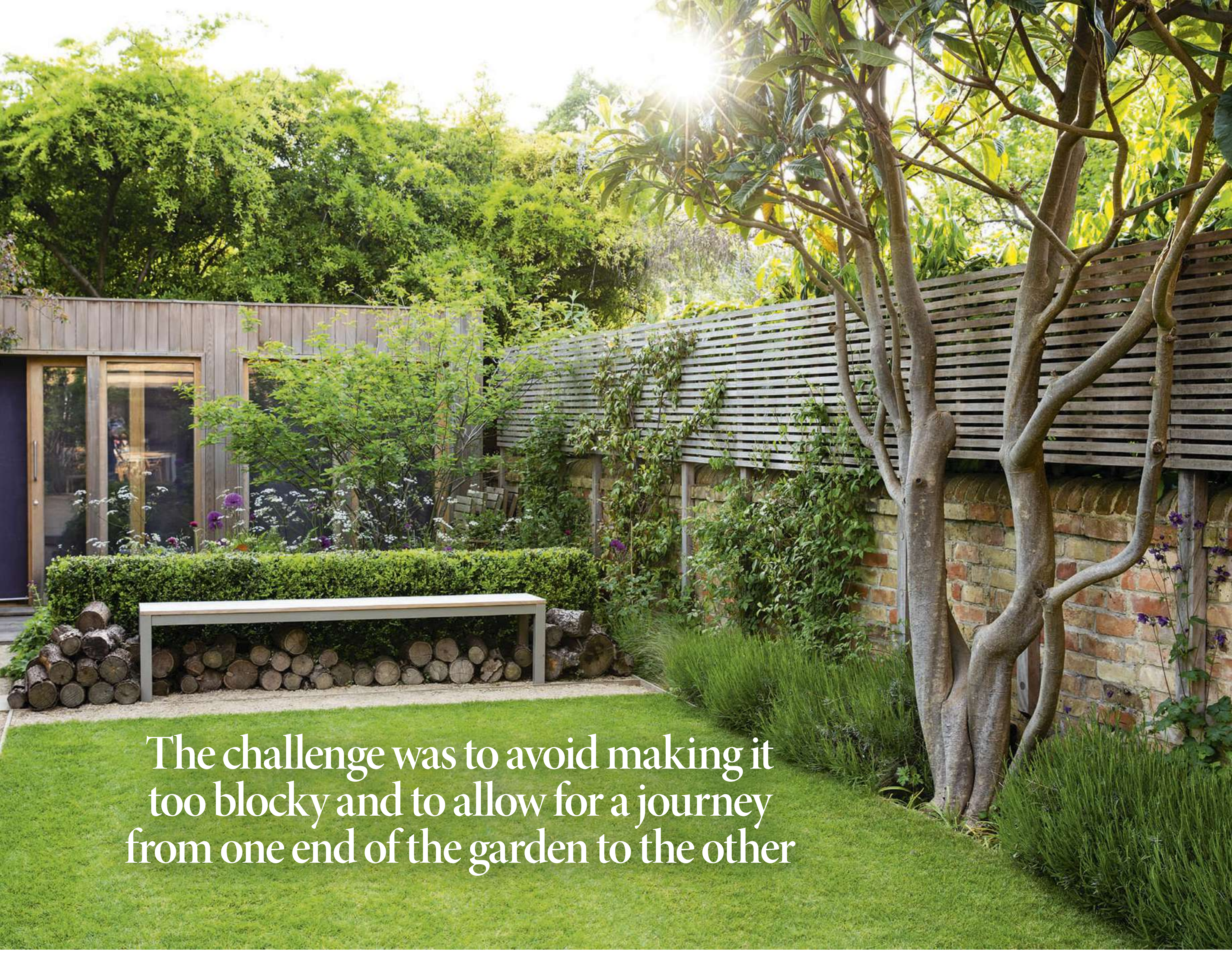


Above The groundcover *Galium odoratum* with its white, star-like flowers thrives here on the shadier side of the garden, and is used as underplanting for the pleached hornbeam hedge.

Left Angus placed a multi-stemmed *Amelanchier* x *lamarckii* in the pathway that runs from the house to the studio. This provides both a visual and physical full stop, avoiding that runway feel and allowing for a more varied journey from one area to the next.

Below A further area of planting at the back of the garden, including a second amelanchier, brings the garden right up to Eve's writing studio. The planting palette was kept deliberately tight to work across all areas of the garden and give a sense of cohesion.





The challenge was to avoid making it too blocky and to allow for a journey from one end of the garden to the other

The smaller a garden space, the harder it has to work, particularly where that space needs to cater for three children and a dog, and include two work studios – while also providing a sense of intimacy and connection with nature and the opportunity to indulge in a love of plants.

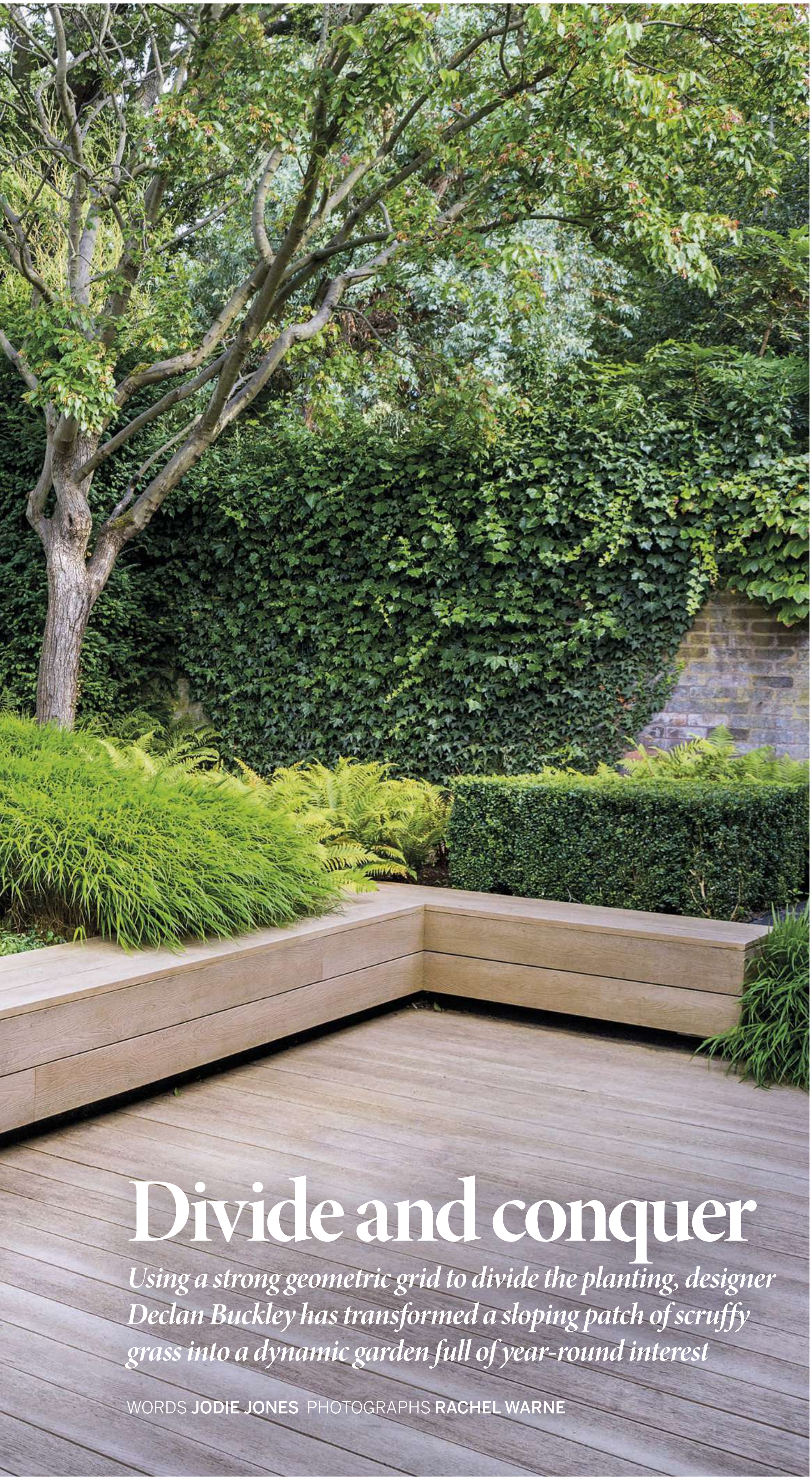
Eve Chase and family moved from London to this Oxford house. Having put an airy extension on the back of the house, opening it up to the garden – and a studio space at the bottom of the garden divided in two for both Eve and husband Ben – the challenge was to transform a traditional, oblong, suburban plot, complete with an air raid shelter and a lot of rubble, into a garden that would work for everyone.

Local garden designer Angus Thompson took on the challenge. Eve was aware of his award-winning RHS Chelsea Flower Show garden Nature Ascending, designed in collaboration with Jane Brockbank, and liked the combination of considered structure with exuberant, frothy planting. "I'm interested first and foremost in space," explains Angus. "And how you can feel affected by the space you are in." The challenge here was to avoid making it too blocky and to allow for a journey from one end of the garden to the other. This, after all, is Eve's daily commute.

"I've included one level change from terrace to lawn and back down to the studios to suggest zoning and a sense of change. It's quite a crisp geometric layout with the planting as a counterpoint that can act as a veil from one section to the next." Angus has also played with the boundaries – on one side it has been left open to borrow the sight of trees beyond, on the other it is more enclosed. The planting is fulsome – thanks to Eve's love of woodland and hedgerow schemes – but kept consistent so no one area of the garden jars visually. "It's a really intimate garden," says Eve. "My daughter loves climbing the loquat tree and my sons like lying on the bench. And I'm constantly tweaking. It's a garden to be in together as a family and we all have aspects that we enjoy."

Eve is a novelist and location often plays as key a role in her books as do the characters. As Eve sits in her writing studio looking out on to her garden, it's not difficult to appreciate just how influential a sense of place is to the unfolding of our daily lives. □

Above The loquat tree, *Eriobotrya japonica*, was retained from the original garden. Angus admits that you wouldn't sensibly plant it there, but it was kept for its quirky shape and tree-climbing appeal. "You don't need to see the designer's hand in everything," says Angus. It is underplanted with lavender, enjoying the sunnier side of the garden.



Divide and conquer

Using a strong geometric grid to divide the planting, designer Declan Buckley has transformed a sloping patch of scruffy grass into a dynamic garden full of year-round interest

WORDS **JODIE JONES** PHOTOGRAPHS **RACHEL WARNE**

KEY ELEMENTS

What Small town garden.
Where London.
Special features Surprisingly sunny and open sloping site, transformed with a strong geometric design.
Size 182 square metres (14m x 13m).
Soil London clay, much improved.
Aspect Northwest-facing.
Hardiness zone USDA 8.
Designed by Declan Buckley (buckleydesignassociates.com).

When you remove the back wall from your house and replace it with glass, it makes sense to take some trouble with the garden outside. And if that garden is just a small patch of grass, sloping down to the house on two planes, it makes sense to call in garden designer Declan Buckley.

Declan has produced many gardens on many scales in the decades he has been in business, but he is particularly well known for his stylish solutions for problematic small town gardens, so he wasn't phased in the slightest when he first visited this tiny plot. "I did what I always do, which is to look out from the house. I stand in every window that has a view of the garden, and that is how the design takes shape."

His client loved sculptural plants, didn't want to 'waste' space on a lawn, but was keen to have a decent area for socialising. Bearing this in mind, Declan first carved out a generous terrace decked in Millboard, a reclaimed composite that has great slip-resistance and blends seamlessly with the oak floorboards of the interior. On the garden side he edged the terrace with a box bench in the same material, constructed with a shadow gap so it seems to float off the ground, then laid out a grid pattern of generous beds, retained by chunky, ebony-stained oak timbers as they rose up the slope. "It was a relatively inexpensive way of dealing with the change in levels, and it works really ▷

This sloping garden has been transformed by giving most of the space over to one huge, tiered bed divided into contrasting blocks. At the front, low-growing *Vinca minor*, dotted with *Pittosporum tobira* 'Nanum', contrasts with loose mounds of *Hakonechloa macra*.

Designing a small garden

Declan Buckley's top tips for putting together a small garden planting plan

- **First think about what the garden will look like in winter.** You want a fair proportion of strong evergreen elements through which you can weave some seasonal interest.
- **Don't forget your vertical surfaces.** When you don't have much ground, walls give you extra space for plants and blur the boundaries, which makes the garden seem bigger than it really is.
- **In a small garden it's important to think big.** Beware the temptation to sprinkle beds with lots of different plants. Really generous groups of your chosen plants will have far more impact.
- **Don't be afraid to use really tall plants.** Your garden will automatically look larger if you can't see it all at once. A lot of my clients have a hard time believing me when I tell them that at the planning stage, but they all agree when they see their finished garden.
- ***Euonymus alatus* 'Macrophyllus' is a resilient alternative to box.** Plant one-litre pots at roughly five plants per linear metre and you should get a good-looking cube within a couple of years.

The planting plan is based on a series of interlocking squares and rectangles, each containing a single species

▷ well with the geometry of the house," he says. This strong geometrical element continues with the planting plan, which is based on a series of interlocking squares and rectangles, each planted with a block of a single species. "The house is a 1960s' bungalow with a contemporary interior, so it was important to echo that with the structural planting," says Declan. "And we had our pick of the plants, because the site is unusually sunny for a London garden."

Bold cubes of clipped box are interspersed by blocks of *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Emmanuel Lepage', *Astelia nervosa* and the underused *Libertia chilensis*. Seasonal colour comes from a bed of *Crocosmia* 'Lucifer', another of *Anemone* x *hybrida* 'Honorine Jobert' and *Agapanthus praecox*. At the back of the garden, a large stand of *Euphorbia mellifera* has taken on the character of a tiny copse since the main stems were cleaned of leaves, in the same way you might with an amelanchier or a well-managed bamboo.

"I am keen on shaping plants," says Declan. "I think a lot of people don't realise how much you can do with a pair of secateurs and a good eye." A beautiful specimen *Eriobotrya japonica* part way up the garden has received its own stylish haircut, and is happily at home. "Everyone will tell you that they don't fruit in this country," says Declan. "But if you've got the right plant in the right place, anything is possible." □

Facing page, clockwise from top

Declan has used large blocks of single species, arranged in a geometric pattern to achieve maximum impact. Repeated cubes of neatly clipped box and blocks of evergreen foliage, such as the flax *Astelia nervosa*, ensure there is year-round interest, while plants such as *Agapanthus praecox* and *Verbena bonariensis* provide seasonal bursts of colour.

A new glass wall at the back of the house was the impetus for the garden redesign – and part inspiration for the grid layout. It now offers views of the stunning border with its mix of plants including *Polystichum setiferum*, *Hakonechloa macra* and *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Emmanuel Lepage'.

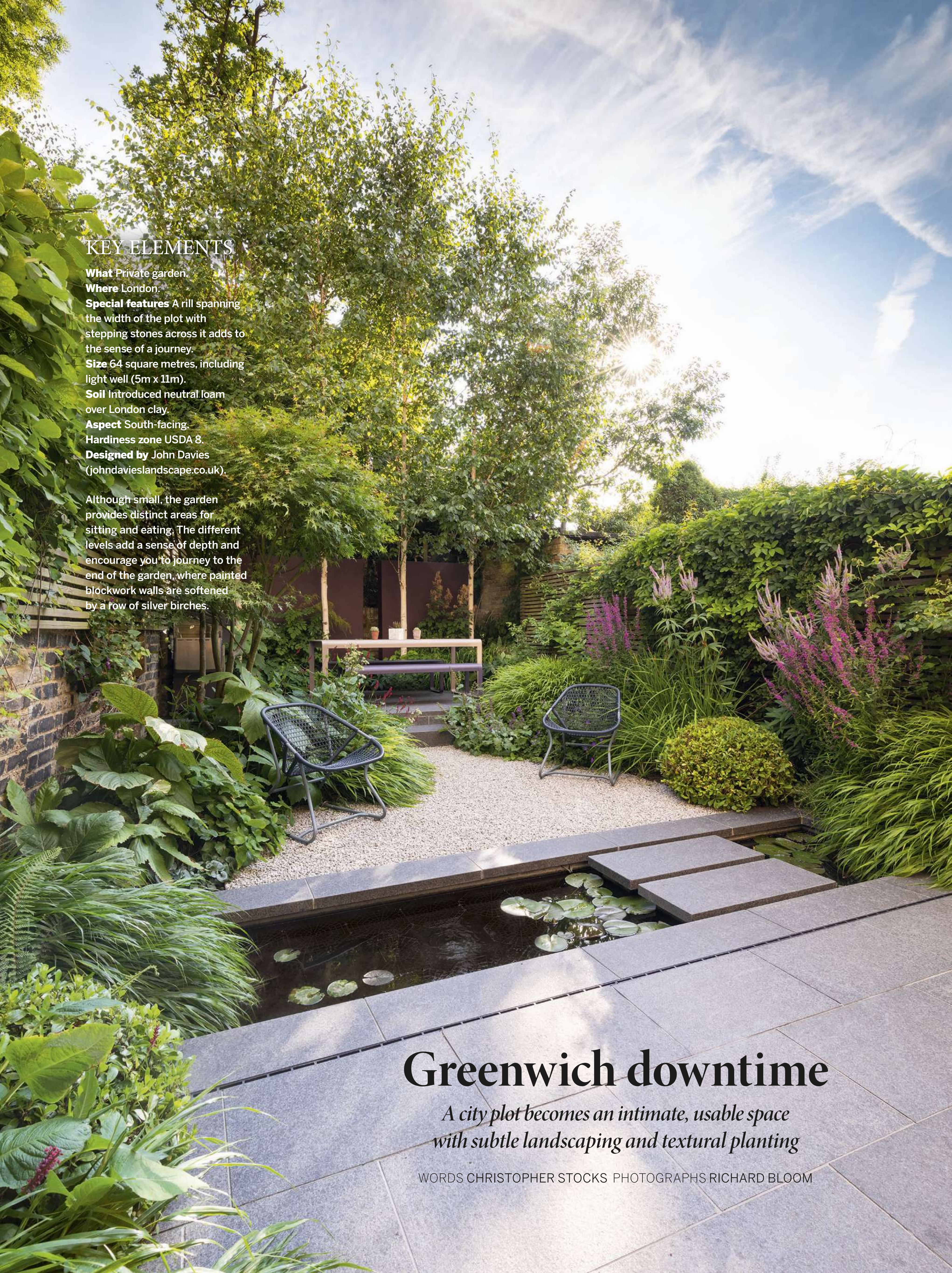
The garden's slope has been countered by dividing the generous border into three tiers, each retained by ebony-stained oak timbers.

This page, from top

A pair of mid-century Solair chairs in turquoise plastic make a strong statement against dark-stained oak raised beds.

Millboard decking provides a transition between house and garden and works well with the many textures, such as this *Polystichum setiferum* and the glossy ribbons of *Hakonechloa macra*.

A bench made from the same Millboard decking encloses the planting and offers additional seating. The shadow gap beneath makes it seem almost as if it is floating above the ground.



KEY ELEMENTS

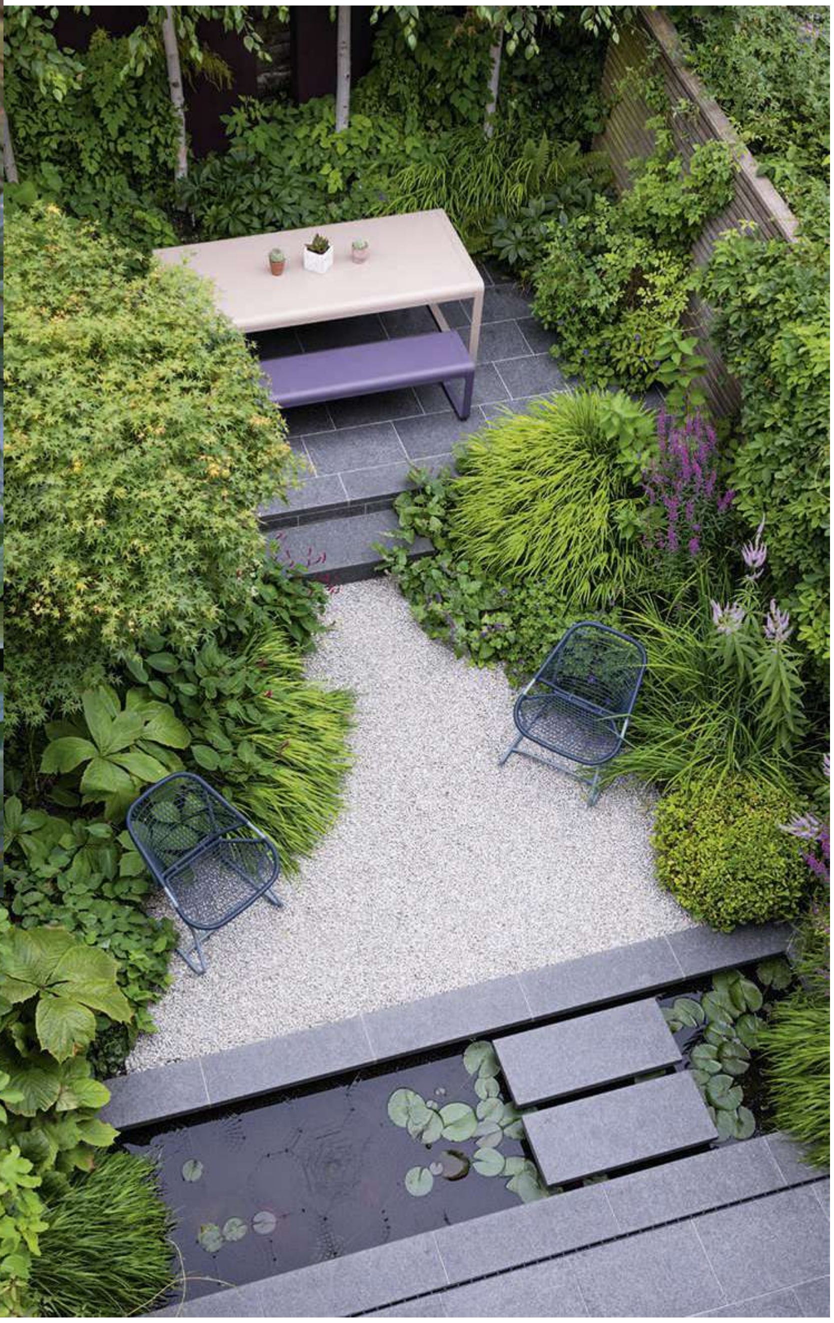
What Private garden.
Where London.
Special features A rill spanning the width of the plot with stepping stones across it adds to the sense of a journey.
Size 64 square metres, including light well (5m x 11m).
Soil Introduced neutral loam over London clay.
Aspect South-facing.
Hardiness zone USDA 8.
Designed by John Davies (johndavieslandscape.co.uk).

Although small, the garden provides distinct areas for sitting and eating. The different levels add a sense of depth and encourage you to journey to the end of the garden, where painted blockwork walls are softened by a row of silver birches.

Greenwich downtime

A city plot becomes an intimate, usable space with subtle landscaping and textural planting

WORDS **CHRISTOPHER STOCKS** PHOTOGRAPHS **RICHARD BLOOM**



Clockwise from top left

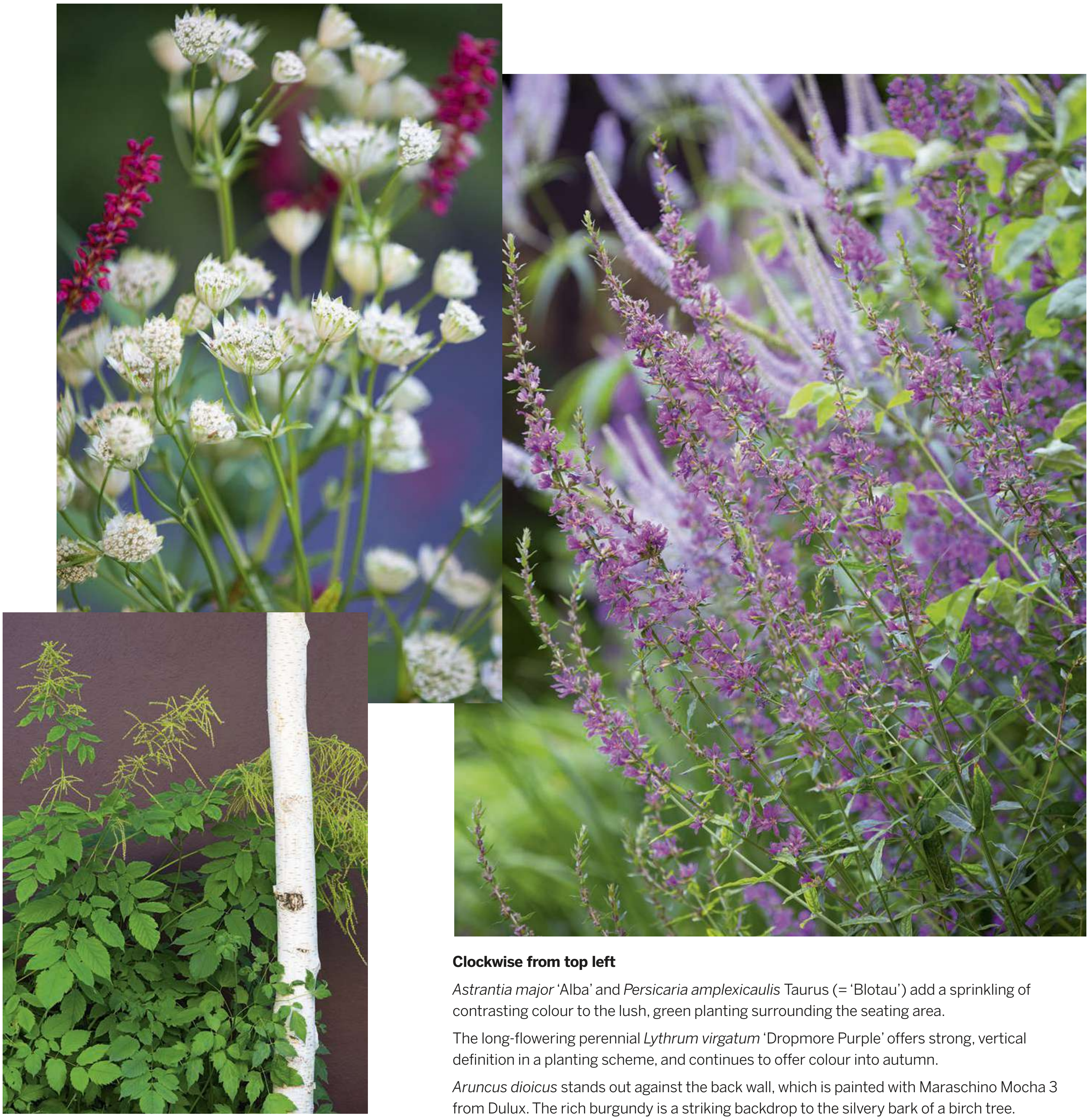
John uses ferns and grasses, such as *Hakonechloa macra*, as a foil for large-leaved rodgersias.

The waterlily *Nymphaea* 'Virginalis' grows in a rill dividing a terrace near the house from the rest of the garden. Beyond, *Hakonechloa macra* and *Rodgersia aesculifolia* underplanted with *Epimedium* x *perralchicum* 'Fröhnleiten' wrap around the seating area with its Fermob chairs.

Hakonechloa macra, offers a soft texture, among which the reddish-purple colour of *Lythrum virgatum* 'Dropmore Purple' stands out.

When John Davies was asked to design a small back garden for a husband and wife and their two children, he had to be creative. Behind the tall, narrow Georgian house in Greenwich, southeast London, the owners had inherited a plot with a steeply rising bank supported by an old retaining wall. John's first idea was to use Corten steel to frame the garden and support the back wall, but that proved to be expensive. Instead, an elegant and effective solution was to install some slatted fencing and screen the wall with two short runs of rendered blockwork, separated by a slit. Painted a rich burgundy, the wall makes a striking backdrop to the row of silver birches at the end of the garden.

Although the owners were happy to give John a free hand for the garden without insisting on a detailed brief, one thing they were keen to include in the garden was a pond, and a rill became one of the key elements of John's design. "I decided to build it across the full width of the plot with stepping stones across it to one side. This adds to the sense of a journey despite the garden's limited size," he explains. He located the dining area and additional seating area at the far end of the garden for the same reason. "The most obvious solution might have been to place the entertaining and relaxation areas right by the house," he says, "but I wanted a reason to use all the space we had." ▷



Clockwise from top left

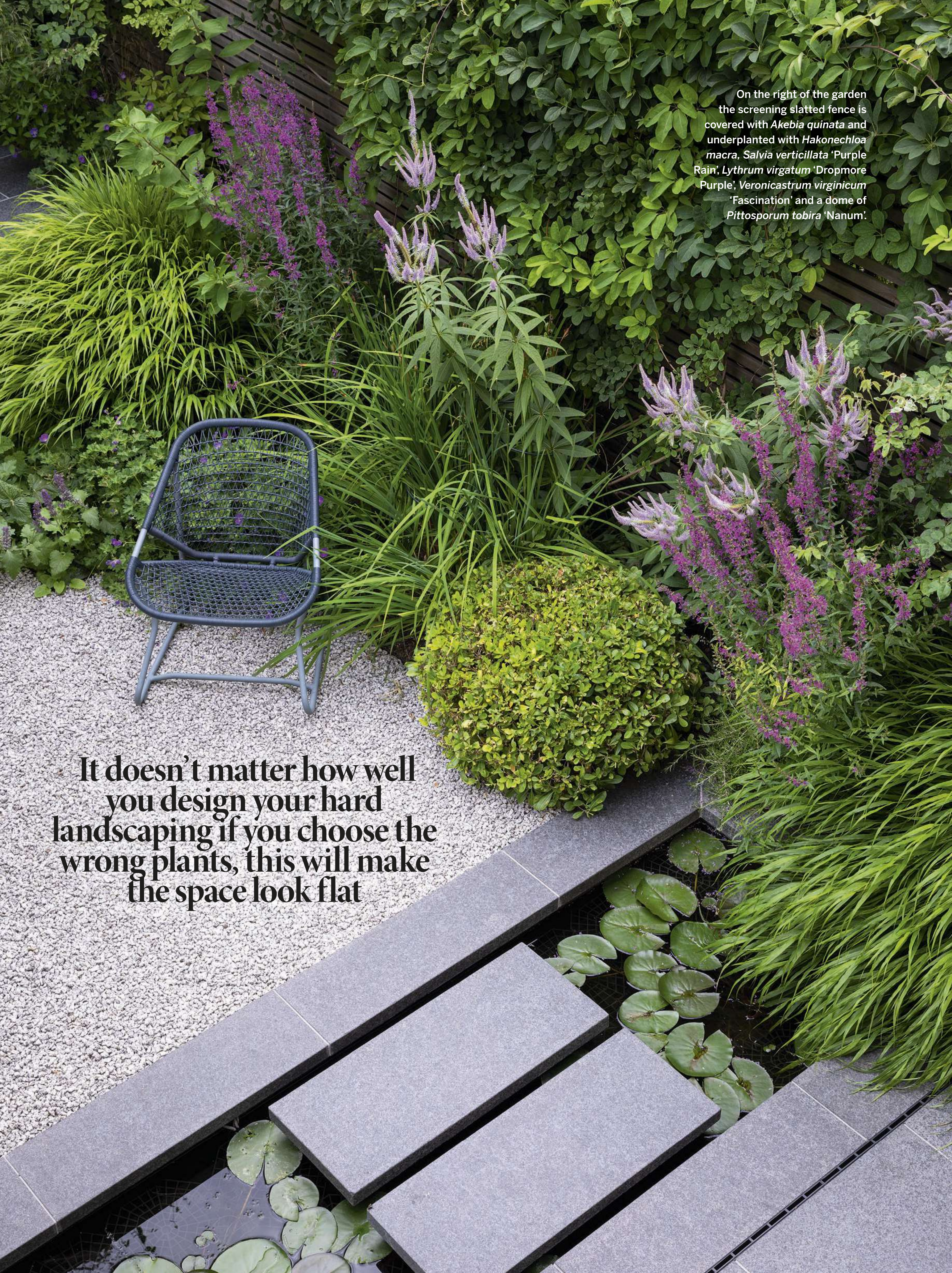
Astrantia major 'Alba' and *Persicaria amplexicaulis* Taurus (= 'Blotau') add a sprinkling of contrasting colour to the lush, green planting surrounding the seating area.

The long-flowering perennial *Lythrum virgatum* 'Dropmore Purple' offers strong, vertical definition in a planting scheme, and continues to offer colour into autumn.

Aruncus dioicus stands out against the back wall, which is painted with Maraschino Mocha 3 from Dulux. The rich burgundy is a striking backdrop to the silvery bark of a birch tree.

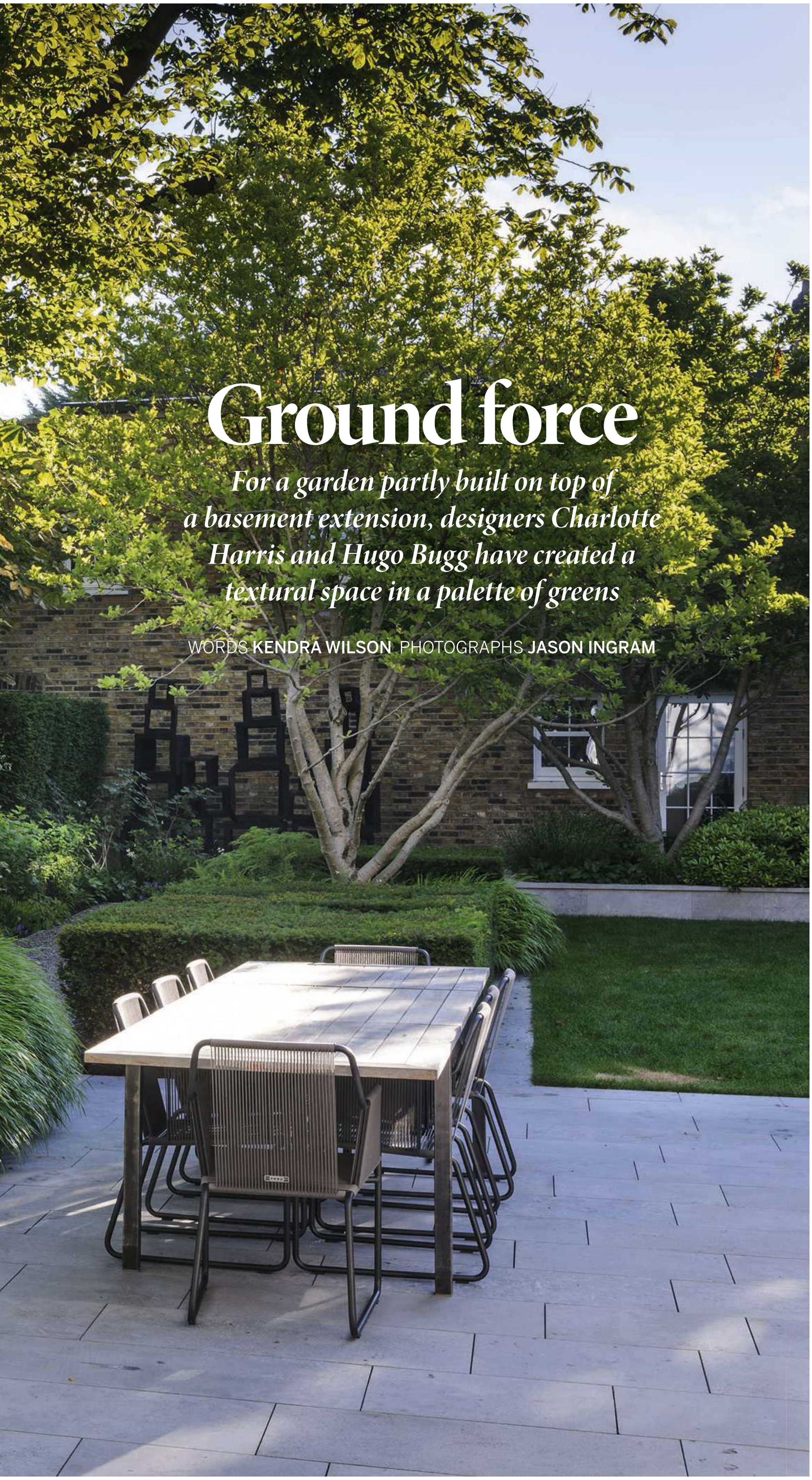
▷ The design is intentionally asymmetrical, both in its hard landscaping and planting, which uses repeated elements – such as domes of *Pittosporum* – staggered across the garden to create diagonal sight-lines. "A lot of my work is geometric, but not symmetrical," he explains. "Asymmetry gives you a more generous space to play with, rather than two half spaces, and it's much more dynamic." Most of the plants have been selected for texture rather than colour, though spires of *Lythrum virgatum* 'Dropmore Purple' and *Veronicastrum virginicum* 'Fascination' add violet and purple from midsummer onwards. "I love the translucency of grasses such as *Hakonechloa macra*, which make a great foil for more solid plants such as the large-leaved rodgersias underplanted with epimediums," says John.

This isn't a plantperson's garden. As John points out, "a lot of clients aren't plantspeople, and that also goes for many designers. It doesn't matter how well you design your hard landscaping if you then choose the wrong plants, as this will only make the space look flat." The garden does include one or two more unusual things, including an *Akebia* that has romped away along the fence and, near the back, *Kirengeshoma palmata*, a herbaceous woodlander from China and Japan that has sycamore-like leaves and waxy, yellow flowers in late summer. "I love plants," John says, and that's self-evident when you see how he has filled this tiny back garden with interest, as well as overcoming challenges in a simple yet considered way. □



On the right of the garden the screening slatted fence is covered with *Akebia quinata* and underplanted with *Hakonechloa macra, Salvia verticillata* 'Purple Rain', *Lythrum virgatum* 'Dropmore Purple', *Veronicastrum virginicum* 'Fascination' and a dome of *Pittosporum tobira* 'Nanum'.

It doesn't matter how well you design your hard landscaping if you choose the wrong plants, this will make the space look flat



Ground force

For a garden partly built on top of a basement extension, designers Charlotte Harris and Hugo Bugg have created a textural space in a palette of greens

WORDS **KENDRA WILSON** PHOTOGRAPHS **JASON INGRAM**

KEY ELEMENTS

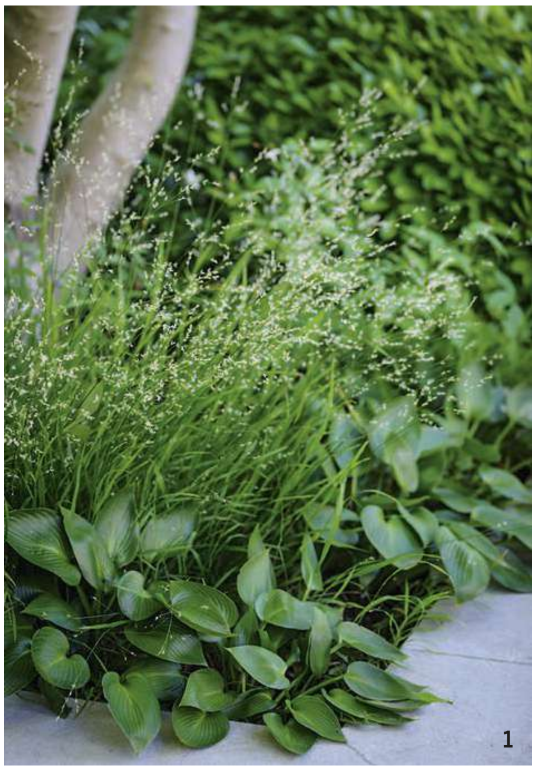
What Residential garden.
Where London.
Special features A garden with height and structure built over an excavated basement.
Size Back garden: 90 square metres (15m x 6m); front garden: 450 square metres (15m x 30m).
Soil Topsoil brought in, after extensive building works and excavation.
Aspect Northeast-facing (back garden).
Designed by Harris Bugg Studio (harrisbugg.com).

A good sweep with a brush works wonders for a small garden, but neatness alone will not make it interesting, which is especially apparent when everything can be seen at a glance. Gardens come alive with leaf textures, tree shapes, considered materials and beautifully made structures; the kind of elements you would expect to see in a show garden. This is easier said than done, unless you were to hire the young design duo Harris Bugg Studio, whose individual RHS Chelsea Flower Show gardens have shown a solid understanding of medal-winning design.

Charlotte Harris and Hugo Bugg announced their partnership at Chelsea in 2017, just before Charlotte won a gold medal for her first outing at the show – Hugo had won gold two years earlier. Now, their team of seven is split between London and Exeter. Since then, the pair have amassed a fearless array of projects from roof terraces and country estates, to vast undertakings such as the National Trust's Clumber Park in Nottinghamshire and the walled garden at the new RHS Garden Bridgewater, near Manchester.

The garden that wraps around this Victorian villa was completed after large-scale building and engineering works on the property. A basement extends under the lawn, while an underground connecting duct leads to a mews at the back. These factors naturally presented some challenges to Charlotte and Hugo, who were tasked with making a year-round garden with plenty of ▷

Multi-stemmed *Carpinus betulus*, underplanted with *Epimedium* x *versicolor* 'Sulphureum', fill raised beds of patinated bronze, with cascades of *Hakonechloa macra* further down. The fountain (made by Bamber Wallis), is surrounded by droplet-like flowers of *Melica altissima* 'Alba'.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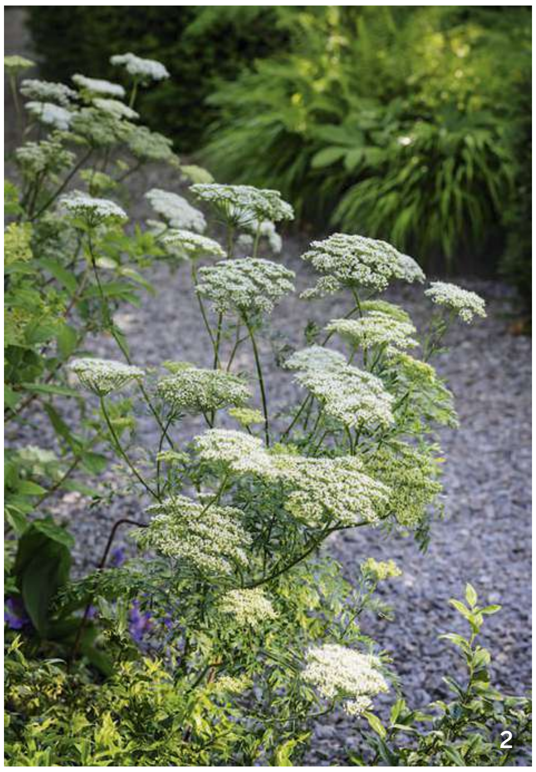
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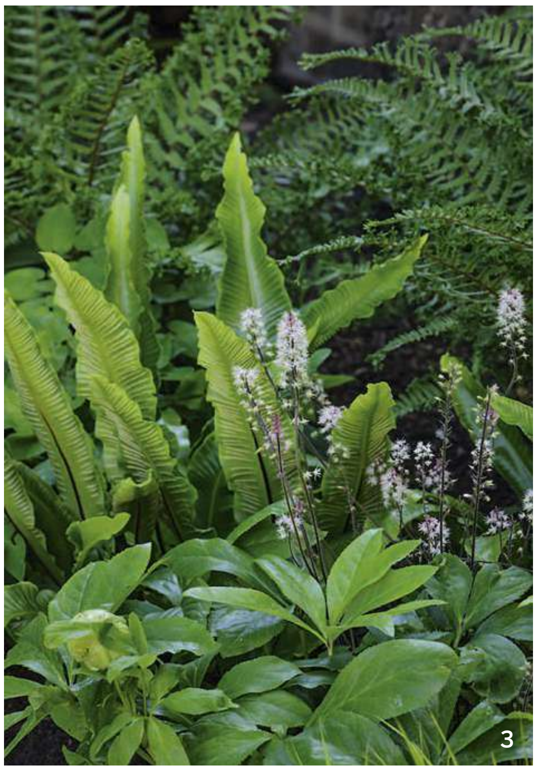
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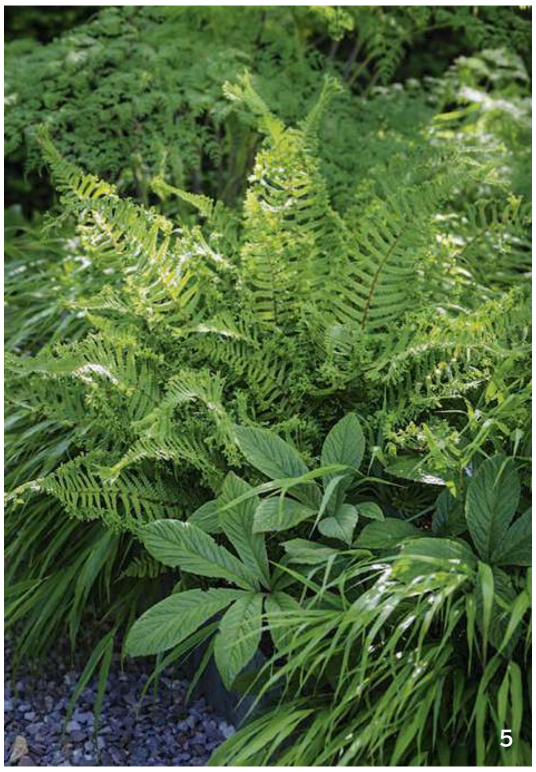
Clockwise from top left
The garden uses a largely green and white planting palette that encompasses a variety of textures and leaf shapes, including **(1)** *Hosta* 'Devon Green' combined with the delicate, white, grain-like flowers of *Melica altissima* 'Alba'; **(2)** the umbellifer *Cenolophium denudatum*; **(3)** the soft pink and white flowers of *Tiarella* 'Spring Symphony' with the hart's tongue fern *Asplenium scolopendrium;* **(4)** multi-stemmed *Magnolia* x *loebneri* 'Merrill'; and **(5)** *Rodgersia pinnata* offering a contrast of foliage with the fern *Dryopteris affinis* 'Cristata'.

Right below
A pale-grey terrace creates a cool counterpoint to the green planting. Charlotte and Hugo often use York stone in town gardens but here chose a textured limestone with fossils in its surface that connects to the greying iroko hardwood chairs.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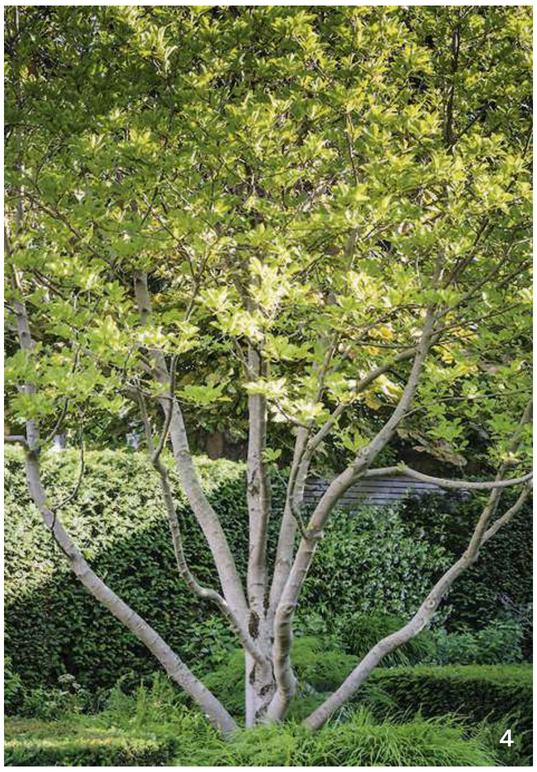
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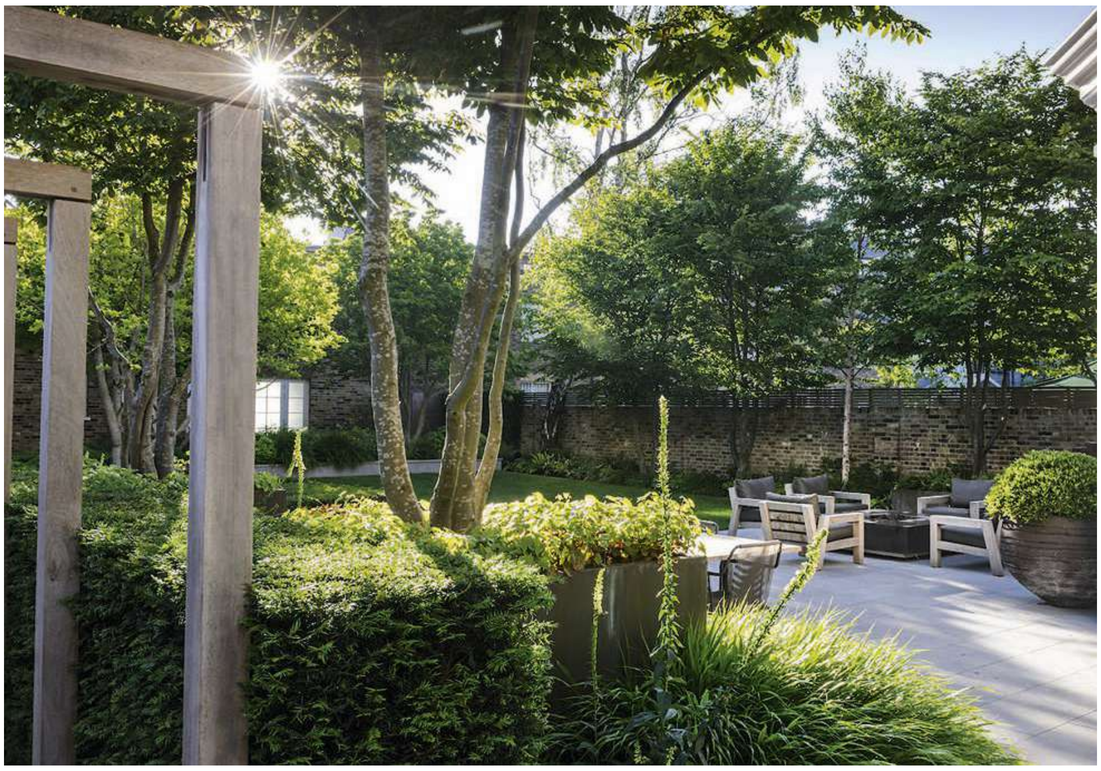
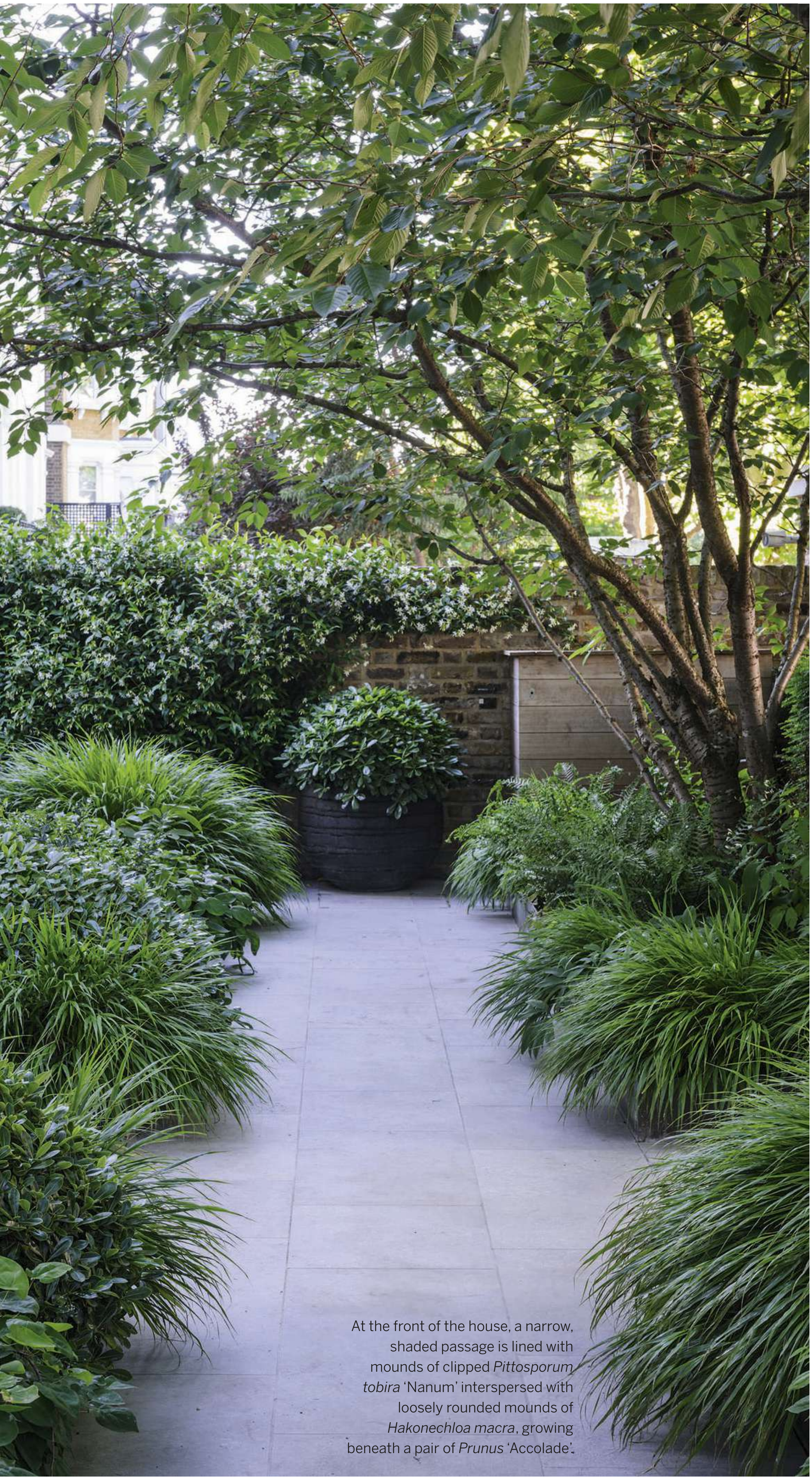
Surface details

Ideas to help compensate for lack of soil depth

- **Raised beds** don't have to be a choice between rustic-style sleepers or industrial Corten steel. They could pick up other elements in the garden – the patinated bronze used here complements the weathered wood of the pergola.
- **Smaller trees** can add height without necessarily needing depth. These hornbeams and magnolias have rootballs of 1.1m and 2m respectively. Both are gently cut back twice a year to restrict growth.
- **A pergola** adds essential height and can be used to add vertical planting. Left unplanted, as here, it looks modern and can support annuals in summer.
- **Planting against a house or wall** will also add height but if that's not an option, as was the case in this garden, then invest in good-looking, oversized pots for clipped evergreens.
- **Furniture that weathers well,** such as the iroko lounge chairs used here, look good and add sculptural proportions to the garden.
- **A lawn** needs drainage but it doesn't need depth.





At the front of the house, a narrow, shaded passage is lined with mounds of clipped *Pittosporum tobira* 'Nanum' interspersed with loosely rounded mounds of *Hakonechloa macra*, growing beneath a pair of *Prunus* 'Accolade'.

> **This is a garden full of vitality and vertical structure, aided by a series of raised planters in patinated bronze**

▷ structure and greenery, that would suit the elegance of the house while also accommodating goal posts for two boys.

The latter part was probably the easiest, since pittosporums in huge pots don't mind being hit by balls, and a flat-lawn football pitch will sit happily over a basement extension. Depth restrictions posed more of a problem for trees and shrubs. Added to this, planting under one of the boundary walls was prohibited because it was underpinned during restoration, and similarly, there was to be no planting against the house. Nevertheless, this is a garden full of vitality and vertical structure, aided by a series of raised planters in patinated bronze.

Twelve new trees, their root balls specially restricted for life in a tight space, were deposited by crane into the back garden. Three *Magnolia* x *loebneri* 'Merrill' and numerous *Carpinus betulus* occupy the raised beds and are also planted in the ground where restrictions allow. The mainly green plant palette is foliage heavy, with reds coming from stems and leaves, and pink and white supplied by weeks of pale *Tiarella* 'Spring Symphony', pink flower spires of *Rodgersia pinnata* 'Chocolate Wing' and frothy *Gillenia trifoliata*.

Walkways are yew-lined, placed at varying distances from the brick wall to create a rhythm that is syncopated. A series of yew cubes are broken by a flop of grasses under a magnolia. Narrow yew hedges make room for a resolutely spare, modern pergola, free of planting but finished with subtle ironwork, which is carried into the details of bespoke door latches, the fire pit and a gently burbling fountain, all designed by Harris Bugg Studio. Hard materials are as important and interesting as trees and leaves. "They are all connected and form the bones of the garden," says Charlotte. "It's got to look as beautiful in January as it does in summer." □

KITTED OUT

A selection of space-saving kit that is perfect for a small garden without compromising on practicality or style

①

COMPILED BY NIKI GOSS; MAIN IMAGE (THIS PAGE AND PAGE 41) BY STEVE SAYERS

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1. YoYo Club Expanding Garden Hosepipe, 30m, £69.99, Marshalls, 01480 774555, marshallsgarden.com **2. Woodstock Circular Log Store,** medium, charcoal, £450, 01932 850140, parkerandcoop.com **3. Patio Glasshouse,** ruby red, price on request, H138.4 x W127cm x D73.5cm, 01457 819155, hartley-botanic.co.uk **4. The Very Black Oven,** £1,195, 01484 608989, delivita.co.uk **5. Fermob Balcon Bistro Foldable Table,** pepper, £389, 020 7692 4001, madeindesign.co.uk **6. Water Butt,** galvanised steel, H107cm x D45cm, £220, 01993 845559, gardentrading.co.uk **7. Portable Carrie LED Lamp,** £150, 020 3002 1196, nordicnest.com **8. Lucano 3 Step Ladder,** red, £219, 0344 848 4000, conranshop.co.uk **9. Barcelona Flower Bridge, balcony planter,** living black, anthracite and white, £12.99 each, +31 (0)13 751 5750, elho.com

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1. Essential Connect Festoon Lights, 14.25m, 60 LED warm white lights on black cable, £79.99, 01423 816040, lights4fun.co.uk **2. Odee Outdoor Folding Bench,** iron, £425, 0333 240 0155, nkuku.com **3. Design House Stockholm Flower Pot Stand,** £190, 020 7692 4001, madeindesign.co.uk **4. Skagerak Folding Picnic Table,** hunter green, £689, 0114 243 3000, nest.co.uk **5. Skagerak Stacking Picnic Stools,** hunter green, £249 each, 0114 243 3000, nest.co.uk **6. Urbalive Worm Composter Starter Pack,** stone, £159.95, 01981 500391, wigglywigglers.co.uk **7. Fermob Basket Long Planter,** green, H54cm x W119cm x D25cm, £475, 020 8878 1994, barbed.co.uk **8. Combine Cushion Box,** small, H71cm x W116cm x D63cm, £1,590, 0345 605 2505, worm.co.uk **9. BinDock Double,** spring forest green, £750, 020 7485 7618, frontyardcompany.co.uk **10. Ferm Living Bau Pot,** small, H24cm x D18cm, dark green, £35, 0114 243 3000, nest.co.uk

⑩

Andy Salter's immersive borders surround his house on all sides, creating an intimate connection to the environment, page 62.

PLANTSPEOPLE'S GARDENS

Plants are at the heart of all gardens and even a small space can include plenty of planting. Good choices and clever combinations will soften hard landscaping and bring together individual design elements

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1 One size fits all
Colour and texture in a seaside, live-work space **page 44**

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Super-sized plants and an eye-popping palette **page 48**

3 A touch of class
A test bed for exotic and naturalistic planting **page 52**

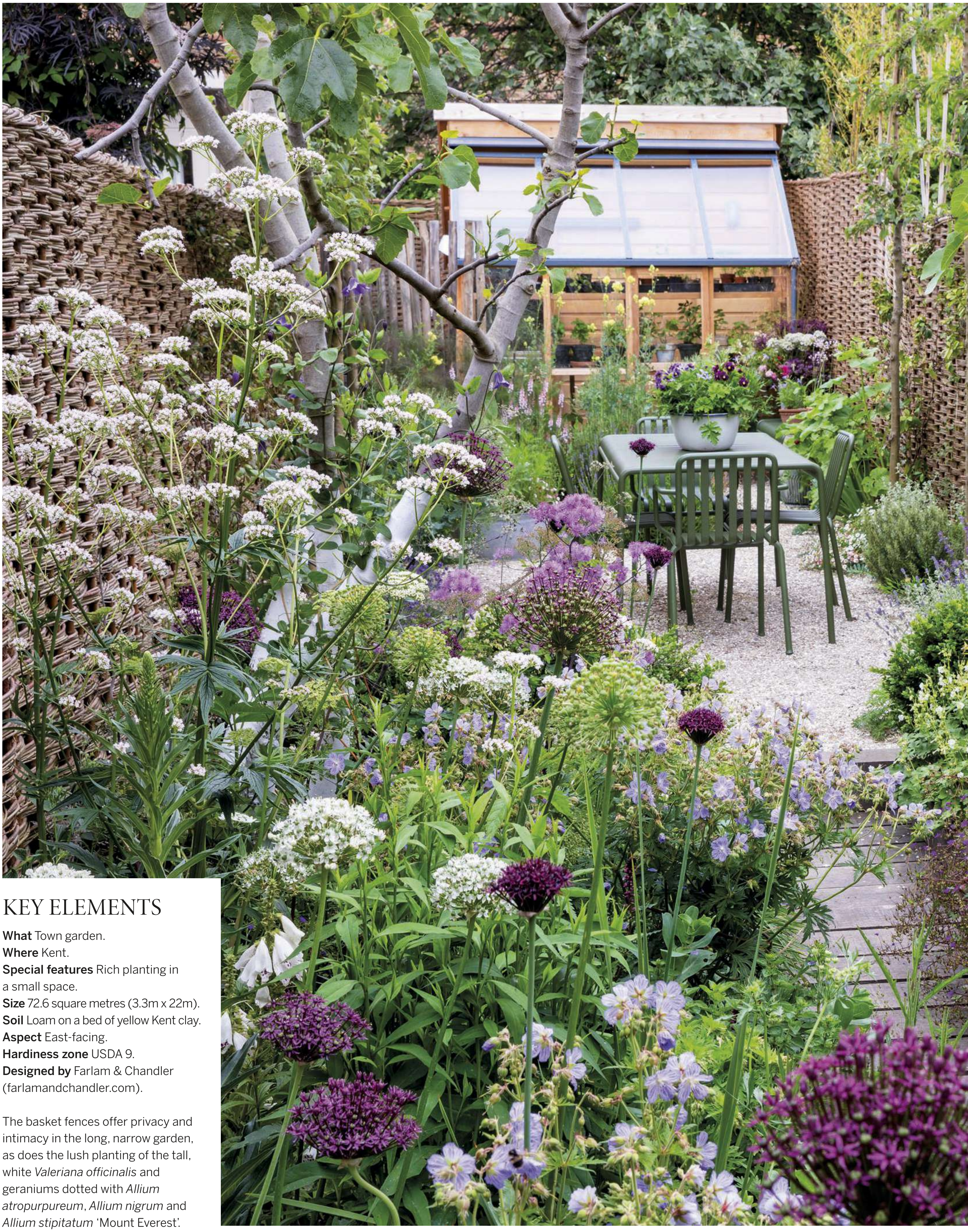
4 All things to all people
Outdoor rooms with bold, year-round interest **page 58**

5 Magic touch
A living composition of artful, mixed borders **page 62**

6 Changing spaces
Focal points create a mixture of calm and activity **page 68**

7 A layered approach
Layer upon layer of abundant contrast and colour **page 72**

CLAIRE TAKACS



KEY ELEMENTS

What Town garden.
Where Kent.
Special features Rich planting in a small space.
Size 72.6 square metres (3.3m x 22m).
Soil Loam on a bed of yellow Kent clay.
Aspect East-facing.
Hardiness zone USDA 9.
Designed by Farlam & Chandler (farlamandchandler.com).

The basket fences offer privacy and intimacy in the long, narrow garden, as does the lush planting of the tall, white *Valeriana officinalis* and geraniums dotted with *Allium atropurpureum*, *Allium nigrum* and *Allium stipitatum* 'Mount Everest'.

One size fits all

Designers Harriet Farlam and Ben Chandler pack a lot into a tiny space fit for entertaining, dining, relaxing and working

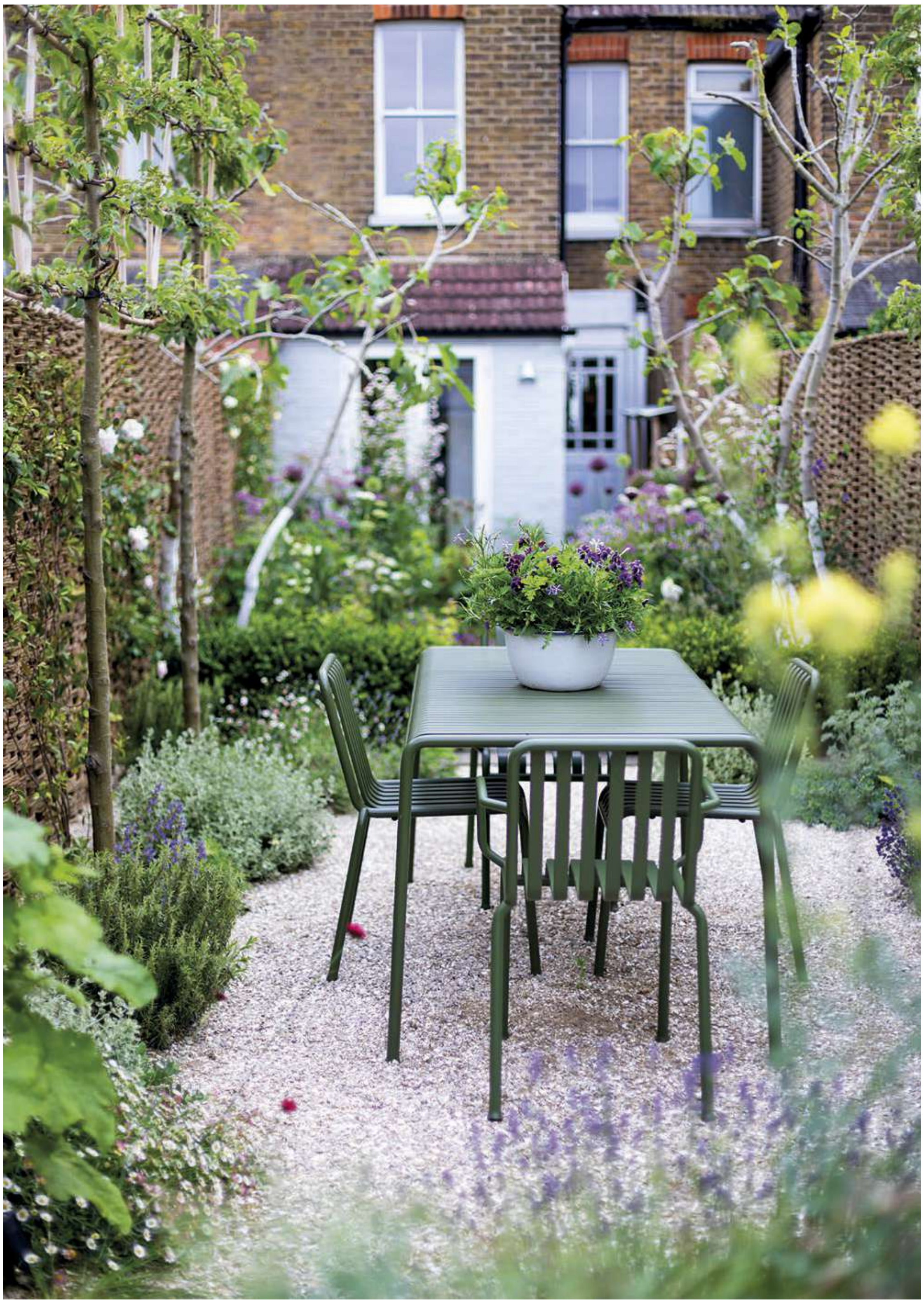
WORDS FRANCINE RAYMOND
PHOTOGRAPHS RICHARD BLOOM

You move into a new house with a tiny plot, so you call in a designer to help with the garden. But what if you and your partner work both together in a landscape business? Does this make the problem of turning a small space into a multi-functional area any easier? Not so, according to designers Harriet Farlam and Ben Chandler.

"We questioned too much, explored too many possibilities, then threw the whole lot out of the window," Harriet explains. "We usually follow a brief, do a survey and make a plan, but in our own garden we just had a long list of needs, including somewhere to eat every meal, together or with friends and family – the house is small, so the garden is our entertaining space, dining room and workshop. The design is built around function."

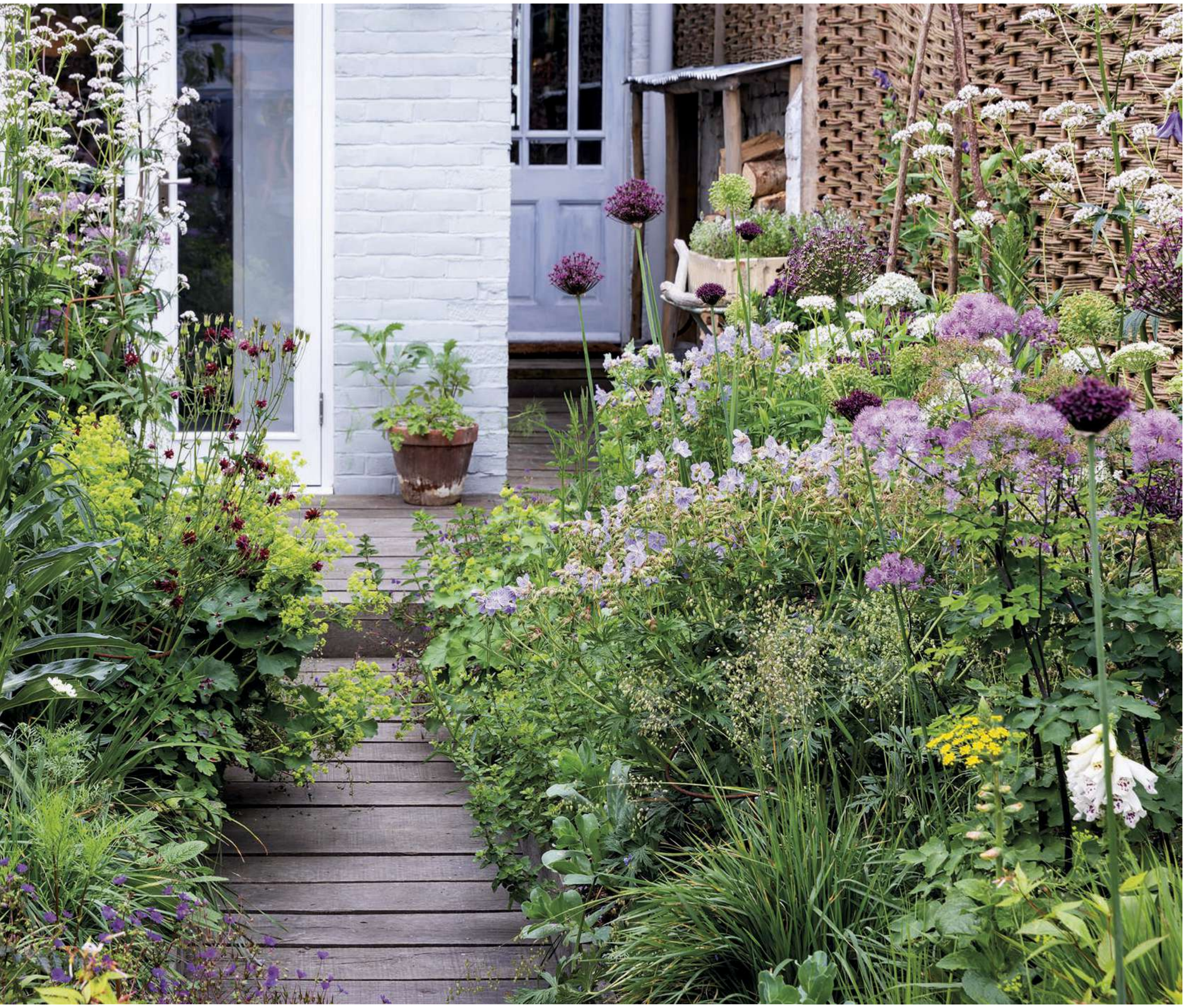
There's a nod to its seaside location in Whitstable. You walk over an oak deck, through a sunken boardwalk bordered by beds packed full of flowers, and under a fig arch, then step up between shaggy, low box hedges (blight-resistant *Buxus microphylla* 'Faulkner') to a shingled, beach-like eating space with a shell and limestone floor (specially mixed by the Allgreen Group). This section is walled with pleached crab apple panels (*Malus* 'Evereste') and dotted with Mediterranean aromatic plants.

This backs on to a working area, partially screened by a chestnut pole fence and home to a Gabriel Ash cedar greenhouse-cum-storage shed: "It had to look good, because it's our view from the house." The whole is contained in a 1.8m-high, willow basket fence by Jay Davey, sparsely clothed with pale-yellow *Trachelospermum jasminoides* Star of Toscana (= 'Selbra') and climbing roses *Rosa* Snow Goose (= 'Auspom') and *Rosa* 'New Dawn' – a sheltered, private ▷



How to create different areas

- **Use different levels.** This garden has an ormamental sunken section stepping up to a raised dining area.
- **A change of flooring material** can herald a shift in use: here a bleached oak walkway leads to a softer cockleshell and limestone base in the dining area.
- **Alter vertical elements.** The 3.2m-tall pleached crab apple panels add privacy to the dining area and highlight the seasons with blossom, fruits and coloured foliage. The 1.8m-high willow fence is half a metre higher around the working area.
- **Hedges are the most obvious solution** to dividing a garden, but here informal chestnut poles hide cooking facilities.
- **Use colour and texture** in planting to highlight a change of mood and function, or act as a barrier. The fig trees in this garden create an arch, and the fennel, hollyhocks and thalictrum all help to form a screen.



We usually follow a brief, do a survey and make a plan, but in our own garden we just had a long list of needs

▷ space where sparrows balance on allium heads and plants enjoy the mild, estuarine climate, revelling in the fabled blood, fish and bone-enriched soil of these fishermen's yards just two minutes' walk from the harbour.

"We wanted the planting to be dreamy, filmy and transparent, reminiscent of the sea as you wander through it," explains Harriet. "The colours change from moody magenta to punchy wine reds with *Aquilegia vulgaris* var. *stellata* 'Ruby Port', *Thalictrum* 'Black Stockings', *Lysimachia atropurpurea* 'Beaujolais' and *Digitalis ferruginea* topped with umbels of *Valeriana officinalis*, and the massive fig trees with their lime-washed trunks add a womb-like quality to the whole garden."

The garden has enhanced the couple's lives no end. "First thing in the morning, we can walk straight out into the garden; last thing in the evening, I'm out there, taking it all in," says Ben. Harriet loves the balance of space and privacy and of formality and wildness, and can be found in the greenhouse with the light on late at night, propagating plants to the sound of BBC Radio 3. In this space, all is right with the world. □

Clockwise from top left

Outdoor dining was the most important criterion in this design, so the shell and limestone base here is functional and hard wearing, and reflects the light. Pleached panels of crab apples *Malus* 'Evereste' give privacy and add interest whatever the season.

Near the house, the planting, topped with white *Valeriana officinalis*, is designed to give the impression of waves, with *Thalictrum* 'Black Stockings' to the right and *Rosa* Snow Goose (= 'Auspom') on the fence.

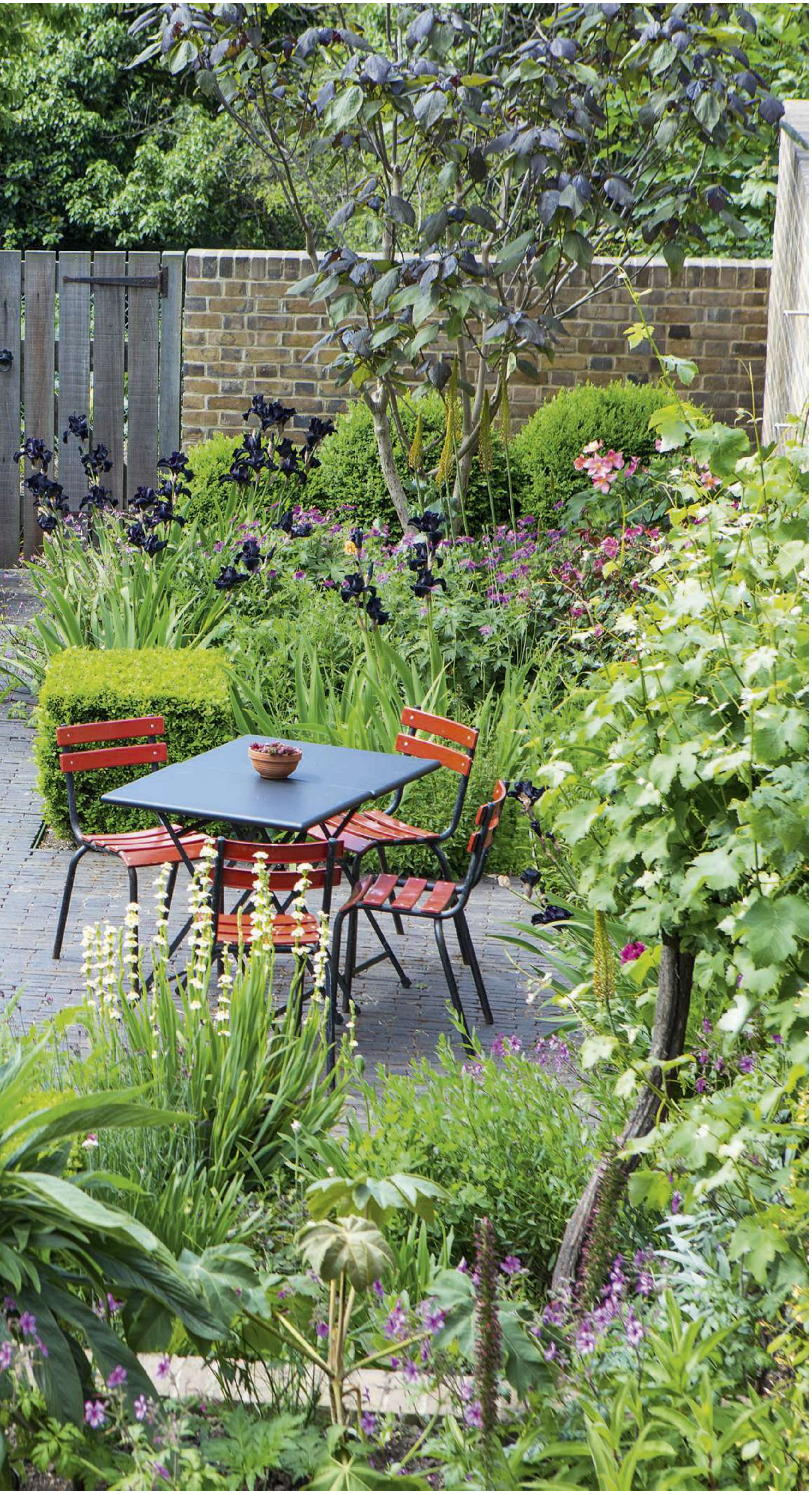
One of a pair of multi-stemmed fig trees that form an arch, intertwined with *Clematis viticella*. The stems are lime-washed to stop local cats from scratching them.

A metal container filled with *Erigeron karvinskianus* on the dining terrace is backed with toadflax *Linaria purpurea* 'Canon Went' planted in gravel.

Queen of her castle

Designer Jinny Blom had big ambitions for her compact suburban garden, and by using good design principles and colourful planting she's pretty much achieved her dream

WORDS **JODIE JONES** PHOTOGRAPHS **RACHEL WARNE**



KEY ELEMENTS

What Suburban garden.
Where London.
Special features Designed to provide generous outdoor living space with high visual impact for minimal maintenance.
Size 108 square metres (6m x 18m).
Soil Extremely poor and therefore entirely replaced with John Innes No.3 compost.
Aspect South-facing.
Hardiness zone USDA 8.
Designed by Jinny Blom Landscape Design (jinnyblom.com).

I always wanted a part-moated house with a walled garden," declares Jinny Blom. "And now I have it." Since she lives in a Victorian semi in south London, it seems an unlikely claim, but with tongue firmly in her cheek her statement is technically correct.

Behind Jinny's small but pretty, part-stuccoed house, the garden is a typically diminutive 6m x 18m. What sets it apart from the ordinary is its aspect, facing south and bordered by a large expanse of open and leafy railway land, and the fact that it is owned by one of the world's top garden designers.

Outside the kitchen door is a generous decked terrace stretching the full width of the house, from which a wooden bridge leads over a rectangular pool (Jinny's 'part moat') that also fills the width of the garden. The rest of the space is given over to generously proportioned and fulsomely planted borders in rich shades of purple, blue and pink, and zigzagging areas paved in black bricks. Around it all run high walls of mellow London brick that replaced a worn fence and made Jinny's dream come true.

This tiny plot has all the wow factor of an RHS Chelsea Show Garden, but is rooted firmly in real life. So the zingy café chairs stack away for winter storage and the three identical matte black tables were chosen so they could be set apart or grouped together for al fresco meals.

The gate in the wall at the bottom of the garden is a classic bit of visual trickery, conveying a sense that there is more garden to explore beyond the boundary. But, cunningly, Jinny had the wall built one metre in from the actual perimeter, sacrificing a little planting space to gain a hidden strip of land in which to deposit all the everyday detritus of a working ▷

By using borrowed views, a choice of sitting areas and bold, colourful planting, designer Jinny Blom has given her garden plenty of impact.

Designing a small garden

Jinny's top tips for making the most of a suburban space

- **Think before you act**. Consider how you're going to use the space and plan accordingly.
- **Be practical.** For example, if you want a table, make sure the paved area on which it will sit is more than large enough, and don't use plants that will need heavy pruning if you're going to have to take all the waste out through the house.
- **Always buy the best wall wires you can afford,** and then cover them with climbers.
- **Take great care with your structural planting.** It will disappear in the summer mass, but it's incredibly useful in winter when everything else has died down.
- **Buy the biggest pots you can.** Jinny recommends Bronzino or Italian Terrace – they not only look good but make plant care easier. If your budget is small, go for galvanised dustbins or braziers lined with hessian and black plastic. They all look stylish.
- **Mass planting is so much better than dotting things around.** Even in a small garden you can plant in fives. Five *Geranium maderense* will pack a real punch.
- **Avoid bamboo.** It drops its leaves when you want to be tidy.

▷ garden. "You need to be practical but bold," says Jinny. "Give yourself plenty of space to live outside. My deck takes up a third of the garden, which might seem like an extravagant use of space, but too little looks so mean."

Her planting is equally bold. A raised bed down the side return of the house is packed with show-stoppers, including a couple of tree ferns, *Anisodontea capensis*, *Euphorbia mellifera*, *Tropaeolum tuberosum* var. *lineomaculatum* 'Ken Aslet' and a vast *Echium candicans*.

Jinny went equally super-sized when choosing specimen trees. *Catalpa* x *erubescens* 'Purpurea' and *Paulownia tomentosa* can both be managed to limit their height, while maximising the size of their foliage. "I wanted big leaves," says Jinny. "They look great and they're so huge they are easy to pick up."

Clipped box, in cubes by the steps and large balls against the end wall, provide essential structure in winter and a calm foil to the herbaceous high jinks of summer excess. Magenta cirsiums and Jinny's favourite iris, the inky purple 'Dusky Challenger', *Echinops* and *Eremurus*, plus masses of shocking pink *Geranium maderense* make the borders zing with colour. The appearance of a rogue poppy, bright orange instead of the tastefully muted 'Patty's Plum' she had ordered, gloriously intensifies the eye-popping palette.

Jinny has lived in this house for more than 30 years. "When I first came here the boundaries were chicken wire and there was a mountain of builders' spoil in the middle of the garden," she says. At that point, she wasn't even a garden designer. "I used to work in a deli and garden when I got home at night."

Over the years, as her hobby became her profession, her own garden evolved as well, culminating in a total redesign in 2000 when she laid down a plan that pretty much matches what is here today. "This time I changed very little of the layout, but I did upgrade the quality of the components. Everything now is best quality."

She speaks with equal enthusiasm about the training wires strained down each wall as she does about the beds filled with John Innes No.3 – an extravagance, she admits, but a necessary one after decades of trying and failing to improve the original, terrible soil. "I love this garden," she says quite simply. "It is my present to myself." □

Clockwise from top left

Clipped cubes of box provide a year-round framework in the more ephemeral planting scheme, and have the added advantage of helping to zone the garden.

Jinny has used a number of spotlight plants that pack a real punch, including several impressive tree ferns, a great mound of *Echium candicans* and sweetly scented *Euphorbia mellifera* against the wall.

Going for maximum drama, Jinny has underplanted her lovely purple-leafed *Catalpa* x *erubescens* 'Purpurea' with a mass of *Iris* 'Dusky Challenger'.

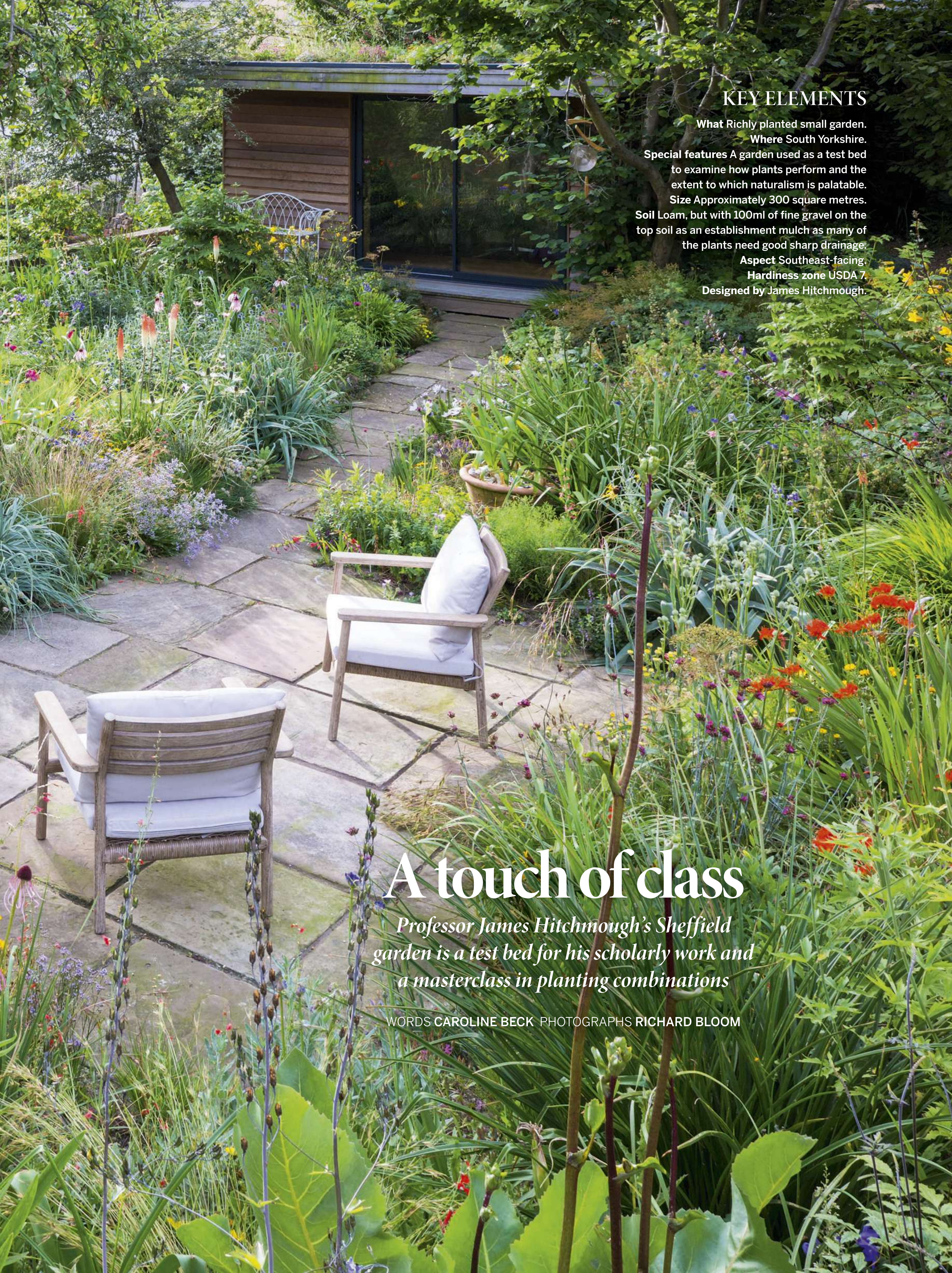
Jinny's 'moat' is a bold move, but proves that super-sized elements often make a garden feel larger.

Bigger pots not only look stylish but they are also easier to keep watered in hot weather. The low, white chair was a bargain buy from Ikea many years ago.

Crimson *Cirsium rivulare* 'Atropurpureum' stands out against the large, grey-green leaves of *Cynara cardunculus*.

You need to be practical but bold. Give yourself plenty of space to live outside

In the richly planted borders of his small city garden, Professor James Hitchmough is trialling some colourful South African species, including *Kniphofia* 'Jane Henry' and *Gladiolus* 'Ruby'.



KEY ELEMENTS

What Richly planted small garden.
Where South Yorkshire.
Special features A garden used as a test bed to examine how plants perform and the extent to which naturalism is palatable.
Size Approximately 300 square metres.
Soil Loam, but with 100ml of fine gravel on the top soil as an establishment mulch as many of the plants need good sharp drainage.
Aspect Southeast-facing.
Hardiness zone USDA 7.
Designed by James Hitchmough.

A touch of class

Professor James Hitchmough's Sheffield garden is a test bed for his scholarly work and a masterclass in planting combinations

WORDS **CAROLINE BECK** PHOTOGRAPHS **RICHARD BLOOM**

Professor James Hitchmough is a hard man to get hold of. Apologetic emails from South Africa, China, the Orkney Islands or Kyrgyzstan explained he was photographing plants in high-altitude meadows. When I finally meet him, Stan his dog upstages him, scattering pots of exotic cuttings before barging into the borders after a cat. None of this fazes the professor. “My tolerance for disorder,” he explains, “is very high.”

Disorder is a word he uses often. As Professor of Horticultural Ecology in the Department of Landscape Architecture at Sheffield University, he’s spent more than 20 years probing how much ‘naturalism’ (for this read ‘chaos’) people can tolerate. Scrutinising his environment is second nature to him. He grew up in a pit village in Northumberland surrounded by spoil heaps. “I asked myself, why is this place so bloody awful and what would make it better?” It’s a question he’s spent a lifetime answering.

His own back garden behind his terraced house on one of Sheffield’s vertiginous hills is his outdoor laboratory. It was derelict when he bought it, meaning waist-high weeds needed to be cleared and remaining trees pruned to open up the shade canopy, and leave the remaining two-thirds open. The stylised meadow he has created unfolds from late winter onwards when bulbs and a low understorey of woodland plants, such as primulas and *Ranunculus*, reduces the area of bare soil that weeds would otherwise swiftly colonise, with taller summer plants emerging as the spring layer dies back. “Here I can examine how plants perform and use volumes of space as they grow, and from a design point of view it’s vital to be able to conceptualise this,” he says.

Summer plants, such as *Berkheya purpurea*, *Kniphofia albomontana* and *Echinacea pallida*, are selected mostly to have leafless stems so the borders have a certain wildness rather than a neat en bloc structure. “I’ve done research into the stage at ▷

James’s favourite summer plants

1 *Hemerocallis* ‘Lemon Bells’
Multi-headed, lemon-coloured, lily-like flowers with bronzed backs blooming in midsummer, which hold up well above foliage. 1.2m. RHS H6, USDA 4a-9b[†].

2 *Galtonia candicans*
The summer hyacinth, a native of South Africa, sends up spires of pure-white flowers over strap-like foliage. 1.2m. AGM*. RHS H4, USDA 6a-10b.

3 *Berkheya purpurea*
A South African species that likes a sheltered, well-drained spot in full sun. Resembles a daisy crossed with a sunflower. 60cm. RHS H4, USDA 6a-11.

4 *Crocosmia masoniorum*
Likes moist but well-drained soil and produces tall, arching spikes of fiery, orange flowers. Good for cutting. 70cm. AGM. RHS H4, USDA 6a-9b.

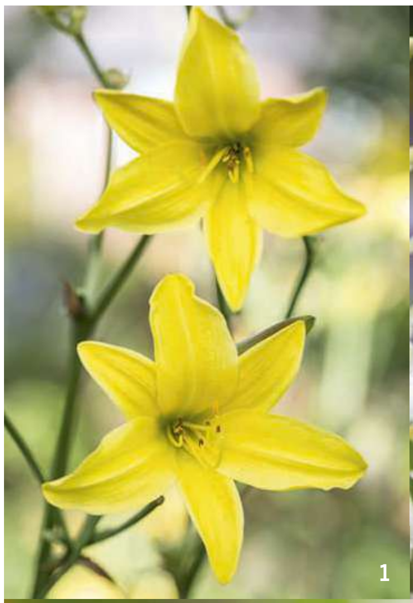
5 *Themeda triandra*
A blue-green, tufted, tussock-forming grass that turns rust red as it ages. Although it’s a tough plant, it needs well-drained soil. 1.5m.

6 *Tulbaghia violacea* ‘Peppermint Garlic’
Can be tender in cold areas so best overwintered in a greenhouse. Otherwise, trouble-free. Flowers best if divided regularly. 50cm. USDA 7a-10b.

7 *Echinacea paradoxa*
A corn-yellow coneflower, with drooping petals around a velvet-brown centre. 1m. RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.

8 *Gladiolus* ‘Ruby’
A glamorous, deep-red, funnel-shaped flower, which emerges from a corm. Needs full sun to flower reliably. 75cm. RHS H4, USDA 8a-10b.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.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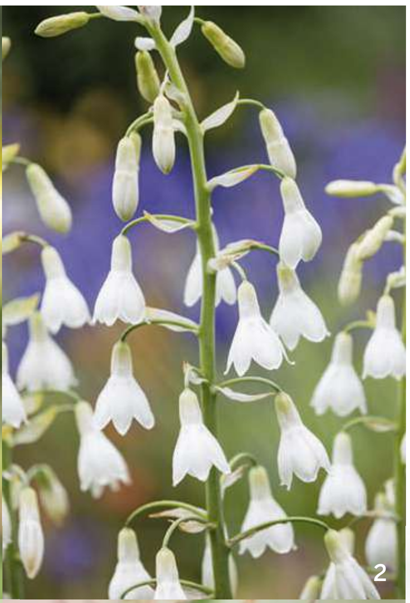
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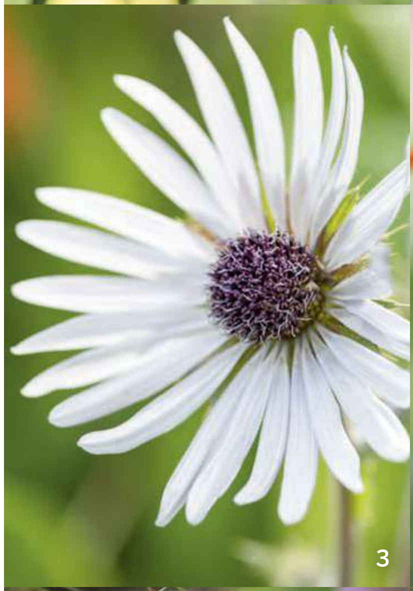
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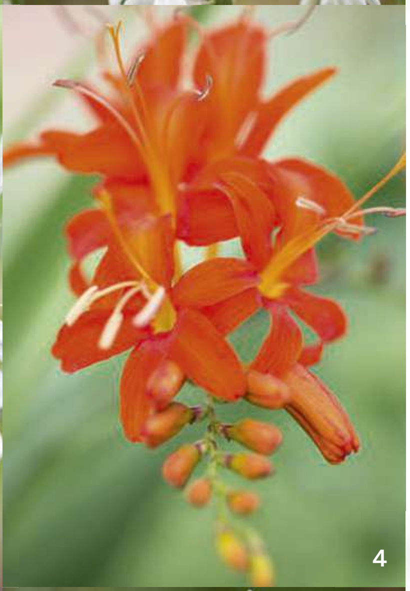
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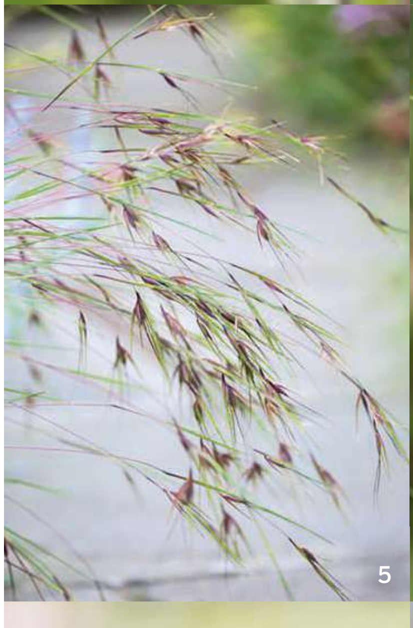
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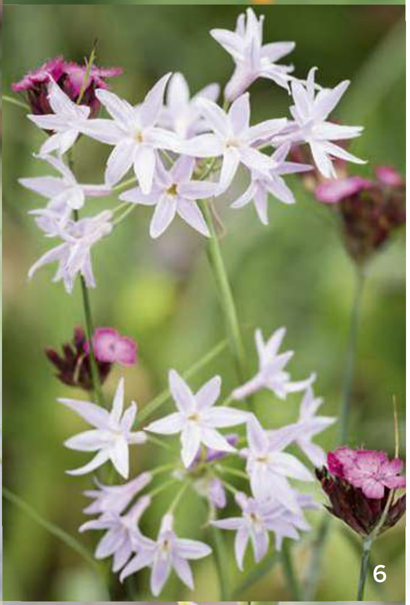
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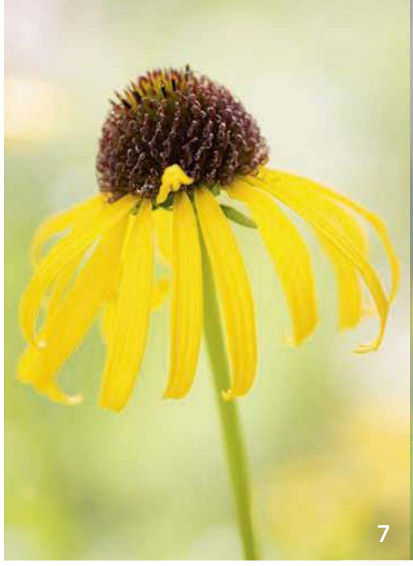
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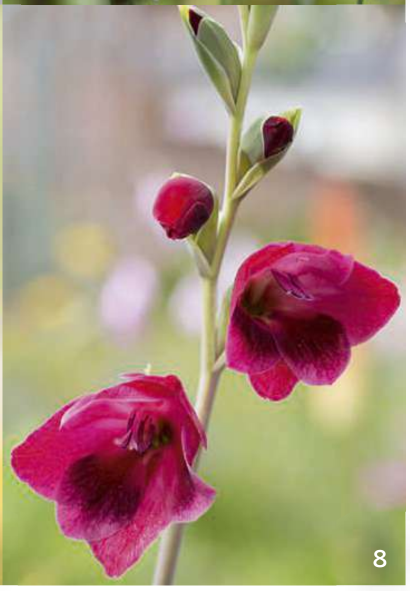
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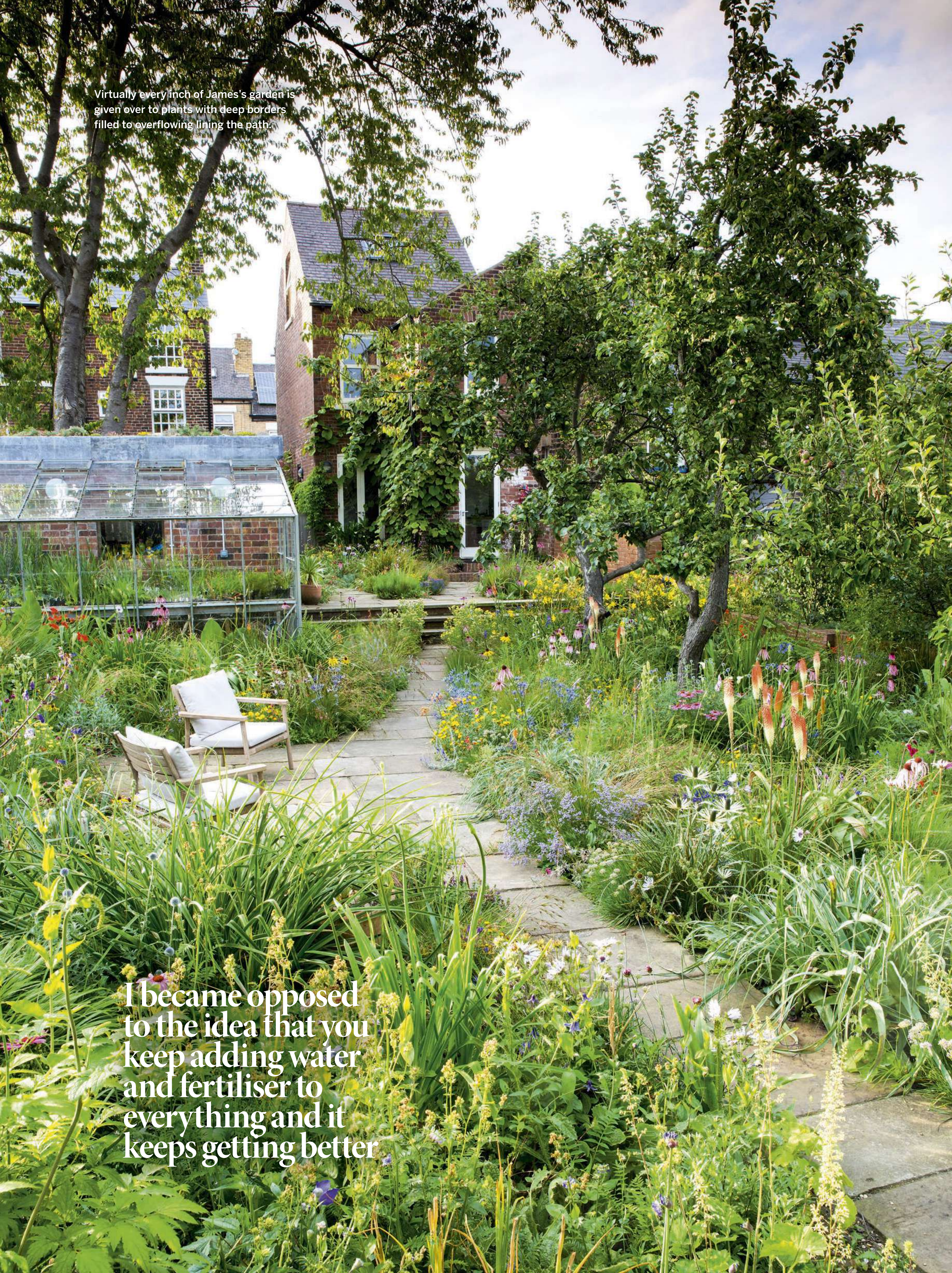


Virtually every inch of James's garden is given over to plants with deep borders filled to overflowing lining the path.

> I became opposed to the idea that you keep adding water and fertiliser to everything and it keeps getting better

Five lessons for a city space

- **Don't discount exotic species.** Many South African plants are very happy in urban Sheffield.
- **A good ground layer of plants,** out of which other, taller things can emerge, will keep the garden looking good in the early months, so plant large numbers of shade-tolerant understorey plants, such as primulas and *Ranunculus*.
- **Trying to have flowers from January to November** means that you have to open the vegetation up more than if you just want a garden from April to September. It's more work, but you're rewarded with greater visual interest.
- **Don't be in a big rush to discard plants** that don't seem to be performing. Give them another year as this can make a big difference.
- **Dogs and gardens can be tricky.** This is the first garden James has had with a dog – one that occasionally wants to dig a big hole.

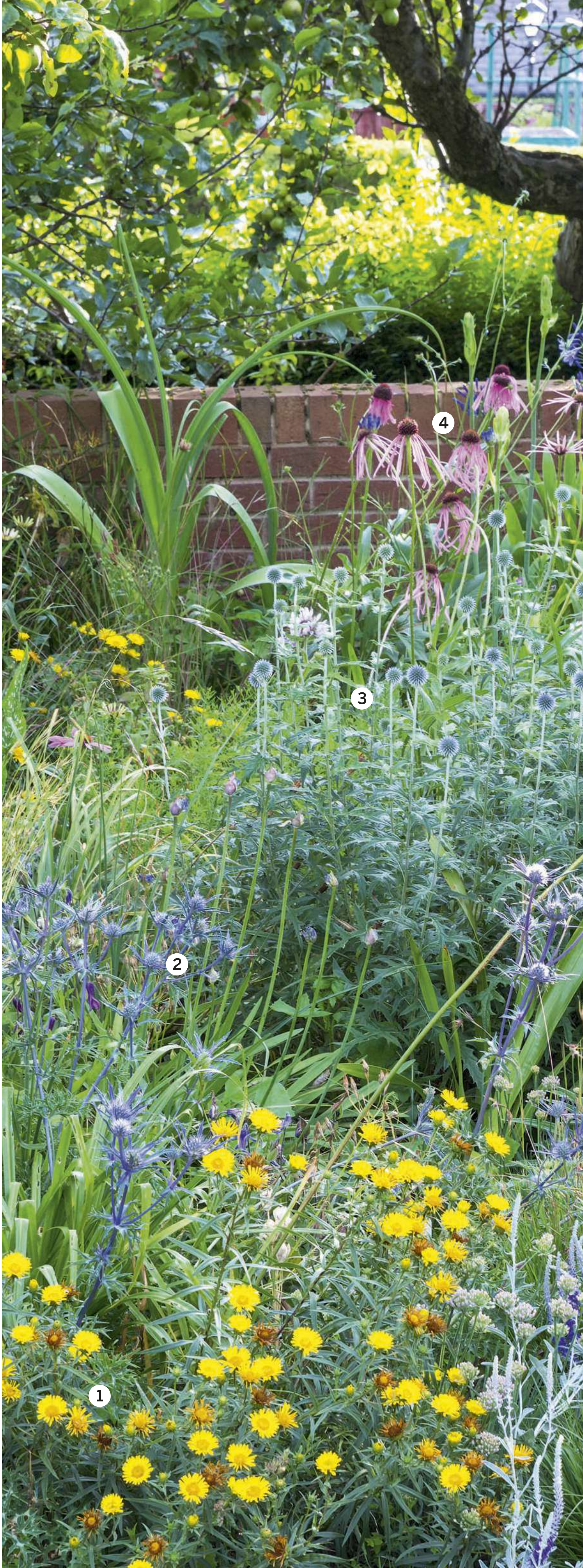
Initially there wasn't a warm reception to the idea of naturalistic vegetation, but now it's become much more normalised

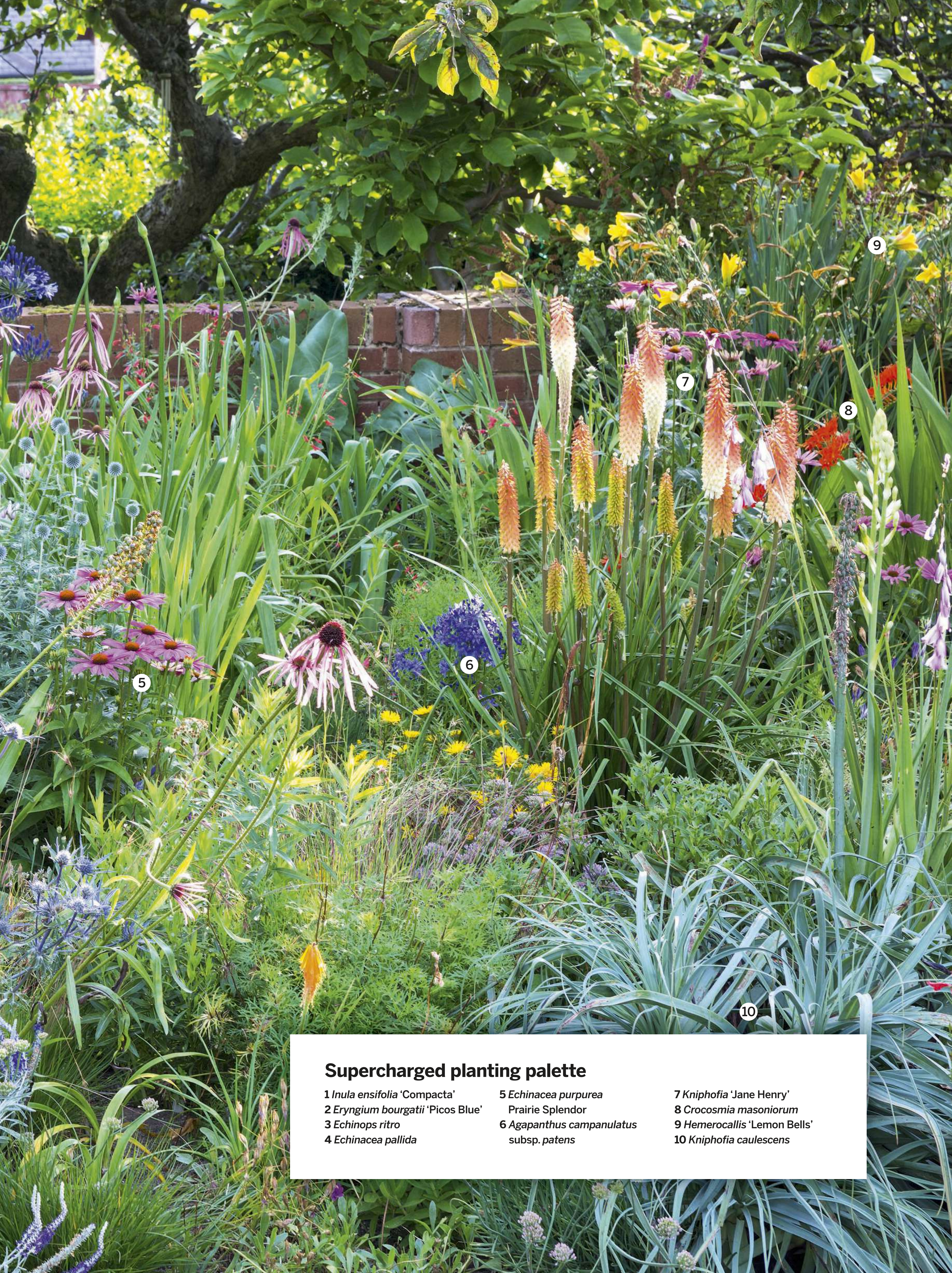
▷ which people become hostile to disorder and regard it as 'mess'. It's much easier to change vegetation than it is to change people."

During the 1980s, James spent a decade in Australia researching native grasslands, an experience he found profoundly liberating and through which he came to appreciate the unfamiliar drought-tolerant vegetation. "I became opposed to the idea in British gardening that you keep adding water and fertiliser to everything and it keeps getting better," he says. "I like a more stripped-back approach, like Beth Chatto's Gravel Garden in Essex."

The plants in his own garden are like stamps in his passport, numerous and exotic. For over a decade, however, South African species have been an abiding interest. Most of the plants familiar to gardeners, such as *Agapanthus* and *Kniphofia*, come from eastern summer rainfall areas, but James has been researching plants from western winter rainfall areas, such as the Hex River and the Komsberg, which are much less common. "It gets down to minus eight, so many of these species, such as *Bulbinella latifolia* and *Watsonia marlothii*, grow really well in the UK."

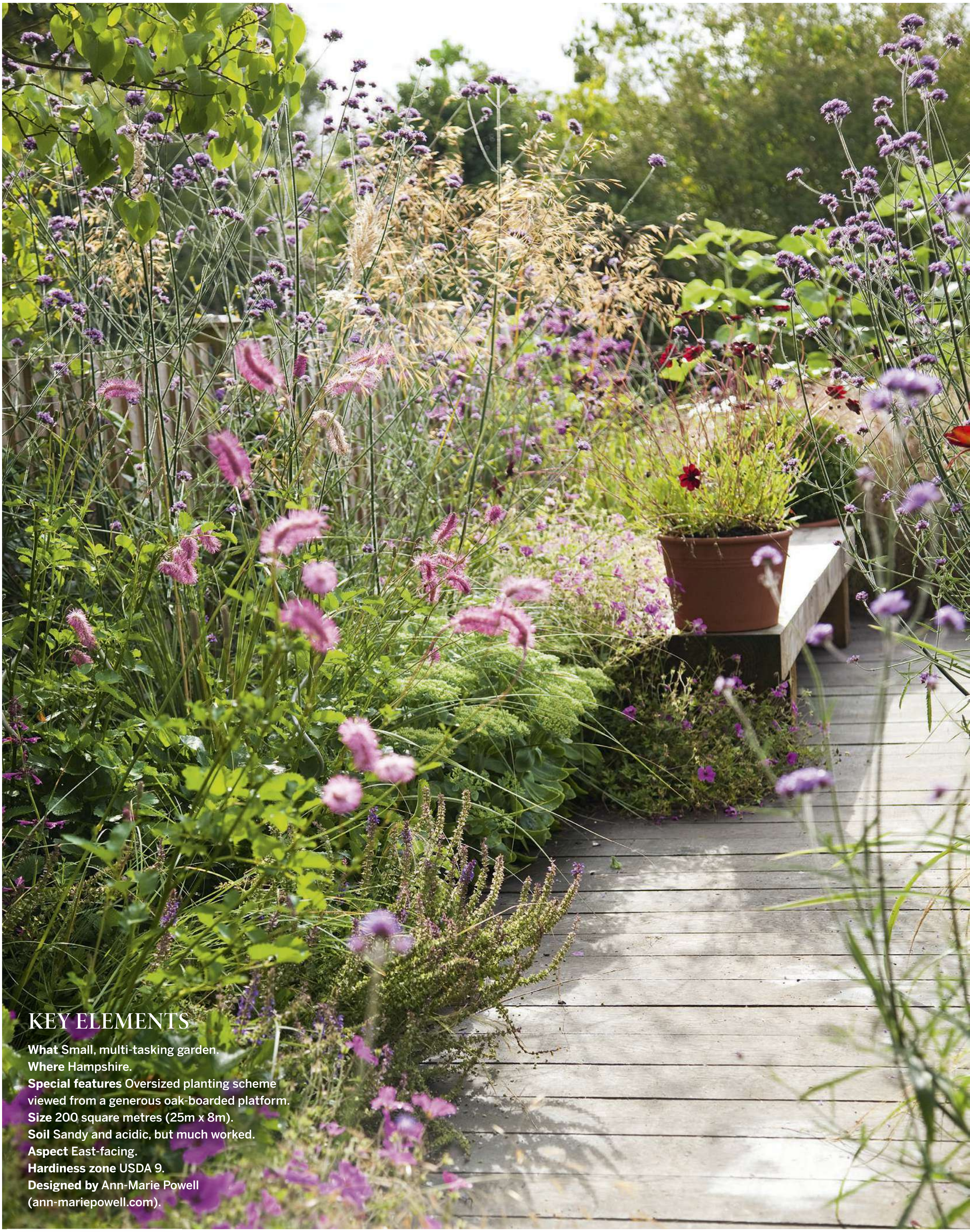
In the past, critics have argued that this 'supercharged nature' aspect of urban wildflower planting is an unnatural confection and difficult to achieve well. "Initially there wasn't a warm reception to the idea of naturalistic vegetation, but now it's become much more normalised, and things like the Olympic Park in east London [where James and his Sheffield University colleague Professor Nigel Dunnett acted as planting design consultants] played a major part in that," he says. "It's having your cake and eating it, but what's wrong with that?" □





Supercharged planting palette

1 *Inula ensifolia* 'Compacta'
2 *Eryngium bourgatii* 'Picos Blue'
3 *Echinops ritro*
4 *Echinacea pallida*
5 *Echinacea purpurea* Prairie Splendor
6 *Agapanthus campanulatus* subsp. *patens*
7 *Kniphofia* 'Jane Henry'
8 *Crocosmia masoniorum*
9 *Hemerocallis* 'Lemon Bells'
10 *Kniphofia caulescens*



KEY ELEMENTS

What Small, multi-tasking garden.
Where Hampshire.
Special features Oversized planting scheme viewed from a generous oak-boarded platform.
Size 200 square metres (25m x 8m).
Soil Sandy and acidic, but much worked.
Aspect East-facing.
Hardiness zone USDA 9.
Designed by Ann-Marie Powell (ann-mariepowell.com).

All things to all people

Designer, writer and presenter Ann-Marie Powell has managed to incorporate areas for relaxation, socialising and children's play into her own small plot

WORDS CAMILLA SWIFT PHOTOGRAPHS RACHEL WARNE

Ann-Marie Powell is an accomplished presenter and writer as well as a talented garden designer and landscaping expert. Her garden, practical, functional and beautiful, mirrors her passion for gardening, her infectious energy and wickedly throaty laugh. It may be small – "it's just a suburban garden really" – yet she has made it work for everything she loves most in life: entertaining, gossip, children, chilling with a glass of wine.

Ann-Marie, her partner Jules, and their two sons, came in search of a bigger garden. She fell in love with the house because of the trees on the road, "amazing Scots pines", and an abundant azalea by the front door. Here she has transformed a self-seeding dumping ground – her words – into an idyllic miniature woodland hideout. A low row of box balls, fugitives from a Chelsea show garden, planted about with *Thalictrum aquilegifolium*, *Deschampsia*, and ribbons of *Galium* line the front of the house, while a narrow path winds back towards the leafy street, through a small area stuffed with bulbs – *Nectaroscordum*, *Crinum* x *powellii*, *Camassia leichtlinii* and *Eremurus* – all spiking through a lovely *Cornus kousa*, a fine *Eriobotrya* and a massive rhododendron. Bulbs are brilliant for a small space, she says, where up is the only way to go. Ann-Marie loves it here, this borrowed landscape with borrowed plants.

The back garden presented a bigger challenge. "Normal, sensible people do the kitchen or the electrics. We did the garden first." With a brace of stalwart friends to help, Ann-Marie and Jules squared up to a mass of concrete rubble, a sharply sloping lawn, a gigantic leylandii hedge and a ropey retaining wall. They punched holes in the concrete before cladding it with oak board decking laid on massive sleepers, ripped out the leylandii, levelled the lawn, dug beds.

The garden has now settled into its skin. The oak decking, slightly gnarled and battered, has softened to a pearly grey. On either side of steps leading down to the lawn, sunken beds, instead of the ▷

Clockwise from left

Ann-Marie's exuberant mix of grasses and perennials includes *Stipa gigantea*, *Sanguisorba* 'Pink Tanna' and *Verbena bonariensis*, with *Geranium* Patricia (= 'Brempat') and *Teucrium hircanicum* 'Paradise Delight', all bursting out over silvery oak decking.

Echinacea purpurea among a haze of *Anemanthele lessoniana*.

Ann-Marie Powell sits against a backdrop of *Hemerocallis* and *Monarda* 'Scorpion'.

Cosmos atrosanguineus and *Verbena bonariensis* mingle with *Stipa gigantea*.

Clockwise from top

A regiment of soon-to-be crimson sunflowers peer up to the deck from the garden below over buttresses of *Anemanthele lessoniana* and *Echinacea*.

The English oak table, home-made by Ann-Marie, complements the decking beautifully.

Looking up from The Sink past a wigwam of sweet peas to claret sunflowers and yellow *Coreopsis verticillata* 'Grandiflora'.

The lean-to workshop nestles at the side of the house and adjoins the decking through a tangle of relaxed planting.

▷ usual balustrading, act as buffers to the rest of the garden, where the tidy-minded Jules insisted on a nice rectangular lawn. Six *Sorbus aria* rise out of the narrow side beds and enormous plants wrestle for space. "Too many trees for this garden, really, but I love feeling enclosed."

"I've gone against the grain using huge plants in such a small garden," says Ann-Marie. *Rodgersia*, *Deschampsia flexuosa* and loads of *Veronicastrum* get really big, but make the most of vertical space. Across the bottom of the lawn runs a small, rectangular bed, crammed with *Stipa gigantea*. "Ace plant. I love it. Far too big. There were five; Jules made me remove two, but I replaced them with three *Calamagrostis brachytricha* when he wasn't looking." Here vegetables and perennials, *Calendula*, *Eschscholzia*, sweet peas, beans, sorrel, and *Verbena bonariensis*, jostling riotously, screen what she calls The Sink, "where we chuck the children", which miraculously accommodates a hammock, a trampoline, an assault course and two large space hoppers, which can't be entirely beneficial for the borders. "I don't go for boringly indestructible childproof plants," says Ann-Marie, "but football is not allowed."

This garden looks wonderful in late summer: the grasses, with *Knautia*, *Echinacea* and lashings of *Verbena*, tower head-high. Ann-Marie loves *Lychnis*, *Hemerocallis* 'Summer Wine' and her red sunflowers, which look you in the eye when you're sitting on the deck. "I'm a bit of a Miss Havisham, really," she admits. "I like things slowly degenerating, rotting, floating off into the stratus."

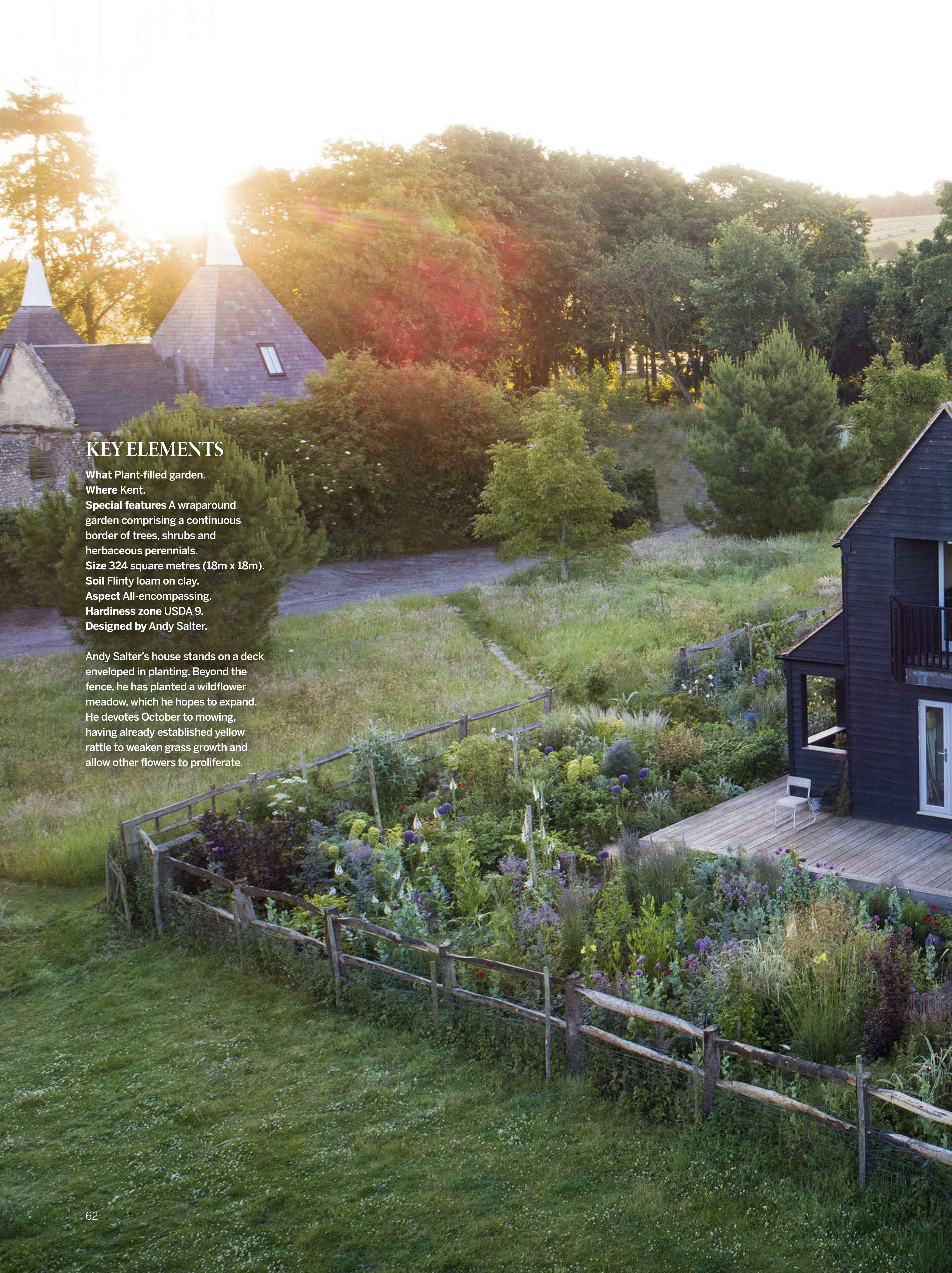
The garden is where Ann-Marie feels most at home. "I love being outside. I eat breakfast here just to get that first injection of light and shade." She hankers after more space – a glass house, a vegetable garden. But this is what she can realistically manage for the moment, and as she says, creating a small garden on a tiny budget comes with its own disciplines and challenges. And as long as she's gardening, she's happy. □

Tips for small gardens

Ann-Marie Powell's expert hints on making the most of a limited space

- **Don't be afraid to use big plants in a confined area.** Make the best possible use of vertical space, and not just with climbers. Go for grasses such as *Deschampsia* or *Stipa*.
- **For engaging (not entirely gardening-enthusiastic) children,** use plants that are fun to grow and encourage wildlife – sunflowers work perfectly on both counts. Benches on Ann-Marie's deck are groaning with pots and baskets filled with tomatoes, basil, salads and strawberries, which her boys like to pick and eat. Down in the borders there are peas, beans and raspberry canes. The boys enjoy helping Ann-Marie hack back the grasses in spring.
- **Plan different places for different moods.** In Ann-Marie's garden the woodland area at the front of the house is for peace and solitude, the decking area is for entertaining and The Sink is a brilliant, enclosed play area for the children. Just no plastic swings, says Ann-Marie.
- **Pay attention to plant combinations.** Mix grasses with tall perennials for year-round interest: Ann-Marie's favourite plant combinations include *Eupatorium maculatum* (Atropurpureum Group) 'Orchard Dene' with *Miscanthus* and *Veronicastrum* with pretty much everything.

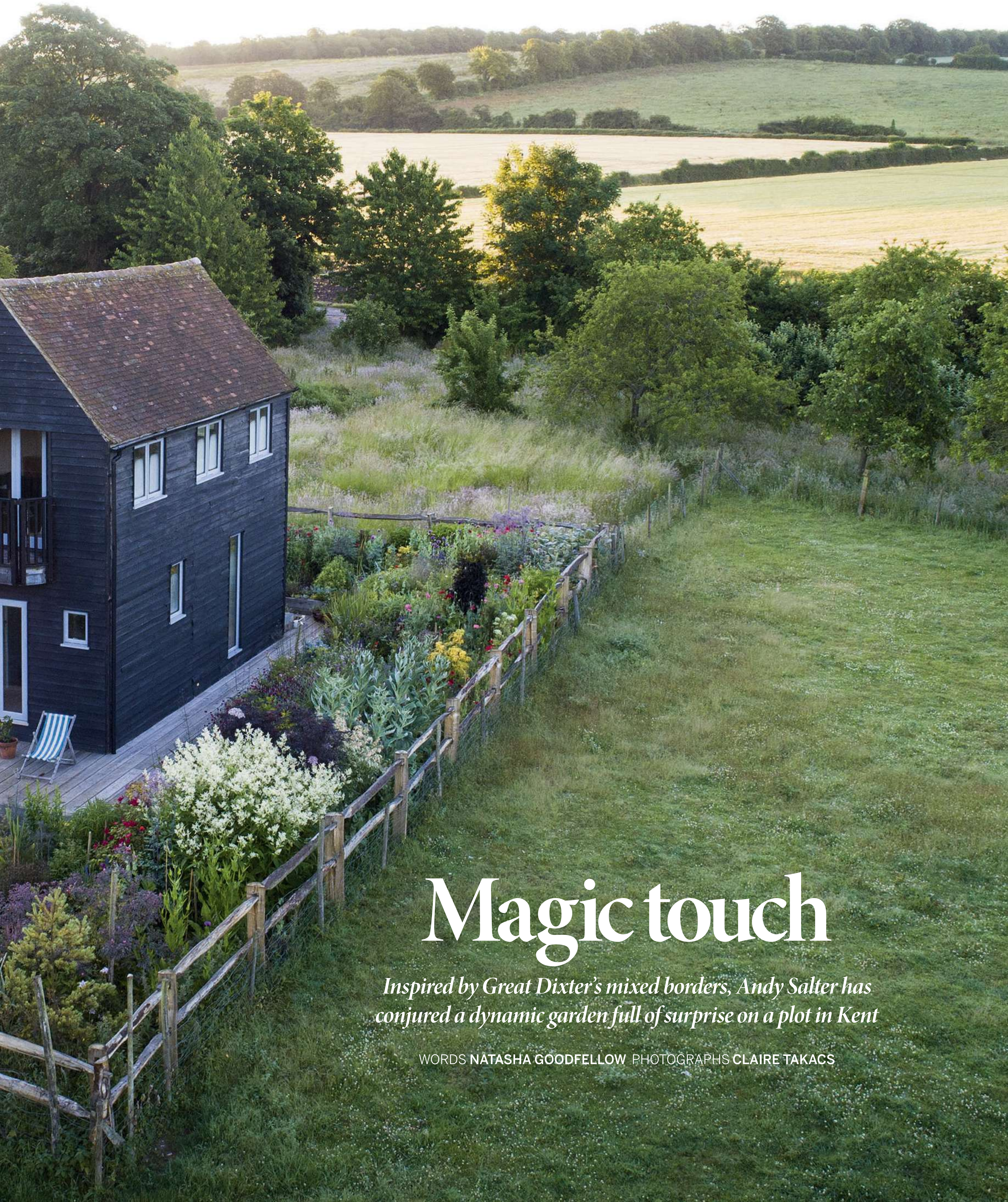
I'm a bit of a Miss Havisham, really. I like things slowly degenerating, rotting, floating off into the stratus



KEY ELEMENTS

What Plant-filled garden.
Where Kent.
Special features A wraparound garden comprising a continuous border of trees, shrubs and herbaceous perennials.
Size 324 square metres (18m x 18m).
Soil Flinty loam on clay.
Aspect All-encompassing.
Hardiness zone USDA 9.
Designed by Andy Salter.

Andy Salter's house stands on a deck enveloped in planting. Beyond the fence, he has planted a wildflower meadow, which he hopes to expand. He devotes October to mowing, having already established yellow rattle to weaken grass growth and allow other flowers to proliferate.



Magic touch

Inspired by Great Dixter's mixed borders, Andy Salter has conjured a dynamic garden full of surprise on a plot in Kent

WORDS **NATASHA GOODFELLOW** PHOTOGRAPHS **CLAIRE TAKACS**

It's such a luxury to have all these plants outside my front door. I want to be out there working with them. I feel connected to my environment in a way I never have in the city

Down a track deep in the Kentish countryside is the kind of landscape usually only encountered in literature. Sheep graze in the fields, kingfishers dart along the river where watercress grows and, sitting proud in a meadow, is a tiny, black-painted house. When Andy Salter first came here in 2014, it was a book that sprung to mind: *Walden* by Henry David Thoreau, about his quest for self-sufficiency while on a two-year sojourn in the 1840s in a cabin in the woods around Walden Pond in Massachusetts.

"I read it when I was 15 and I've loved it ever since," says Andy. "I'd take holidays to America and stay in huts in the middle of nowhere but it never seemed like something I could realistically achieve in life. And then here was this place." Simple, wooden and with the potential to be surrounded by garden (at that time there was merely rough grass). It was perfect.

The possibility of making a garden was important to Andy, a special-effects artist, who had also fallen hard for horticulture. A working holiday on a farm in Japan had led to a course at Hadlow College in Kent and then, inspired by a tutor who sang Christopher Lloyd's praises, on to Great Dixter where Andy volunteered under head gardener Fergus Garrett, sometimes for as many as four days a week, for four years.

"I was very shy at first," says Andy. "I was full of admiration for the gardeners and what they were conjuring. It felt like alchemy, and the polar opposite of my career." But as time went on, he realised that the two were more closely linked than he had thought.

"A good garden, an evocative garden, is often all about taking elements that don't naturally coexist and putting them together in a way that's inspiring or pleasing and looks natural, which is what I've spent my whole life doing at work. Gardening takes this to a whole new level because you're working with nature directly," he says. "It's a living composition; there's something truly magical about it."

This 'magical, natural' dynamic is what Andy set out to create in his own garden. Yew hedges, typical of Great Dixter, were dismissed as they would have taken up too much ornamental space. Instead, Andy took his inspiration from the Long Border, with its artful, mixed plantings of trees, shrubs, perennials, bulbs and annuals.

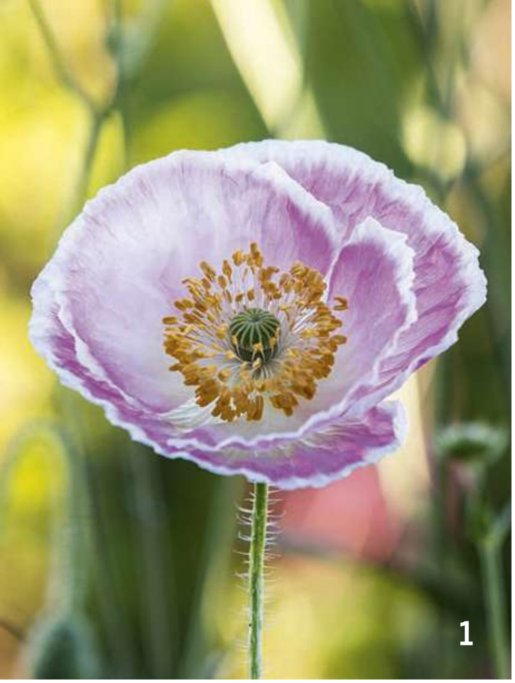
"I wanted to get up every morning and be surprised," he says. "There's something about being disarmed that pulls you in, ▷

Clockwise from top left

In the rear corner of the garden, a mass of jewel-coloured poppies mingle with cornflowers, alliums and a mauve form of *Knautia macedonica*, their soft flowers a striking contrast to the sword-leaved *Eryngium pandanifolium* 'Physic Purple'. New and unfamiliar plants that Andy wishes to trial are grown in pots on the deck.

Plants, shapes and colours are repeated to make a coherent whole. The red of *Rosa* 'Florence Mary Morse' is echoed in ladybird poppies and, later, in *Dahlia* 'Bishop of Llandaff', and the domed heads of *Angelica archangelica* are mirrored in the *Euphorbia characias* subsp. *wulfenii*. Stands of *Miscanthus sinensis* var. *condensatus* 'Cosmopolitan', *Digitalis* and *Thalictrum* 'Elin' add vertical interest.

Andy loves the contrast of the dark foliage of *Sambucus nigra* f. *porphyrophylla* 'Eva' with the white-flowered *Persicaria* x *fennica* (a combination also used at Great Dixter) and the lilac *Knautia macedonica*. Cardoons and a golden-leaved *Sambucus racemosa* 'Sutherland Gold' will grow to screen the house beyond.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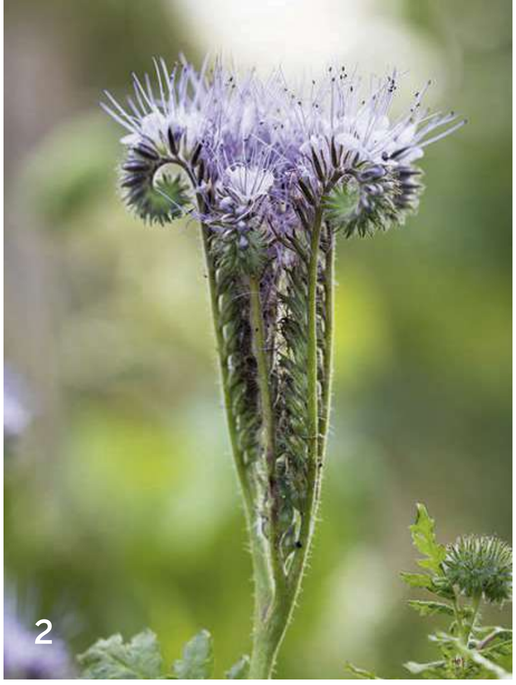
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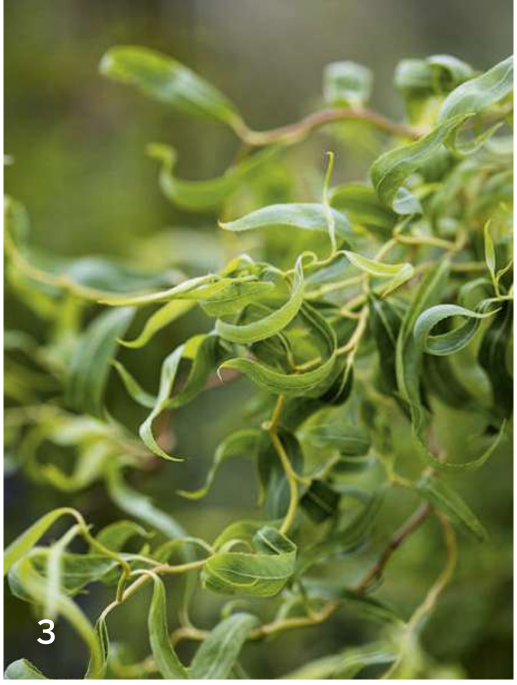
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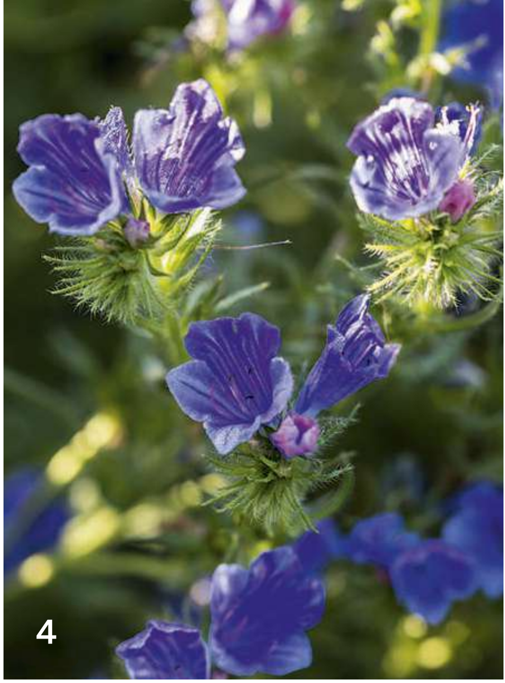
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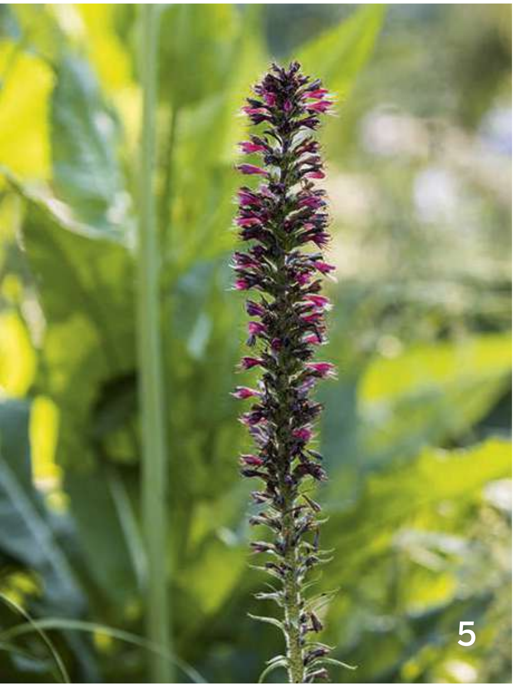
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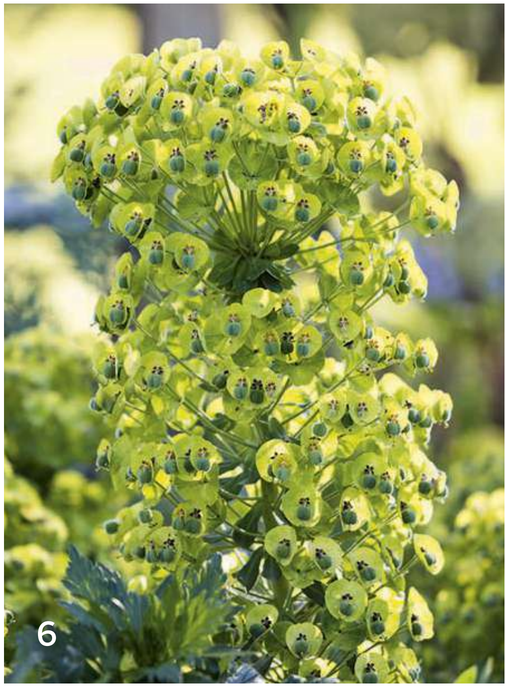
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12 KEY PLANTS

1 *Papaver rhoeas* Shirley Group
Raised by the Rev W Wilks in his garden in Shirley near Croydon in the 1880s, the pretty pink and white Shirley poppy is one of the easiest plants to grow. 75cm. RHS H7, USDA 3a-10b[†].

2 *Phacelia tanacetifolia*
Initially sown as a green manure, this boisterous annual re-emerges every year in unexpected places with a soft haze of pastel purple. 1.2m. RHS H4, USDA 6a-8b.

3 *Salix* x *sepulcralis* 'Erythroflexuosa'
A large, contorted willow with marmalade-coloured bark maturing to a dark brown, and gently curving, narrow, green leaves. 5m. AGM*. RHS H5.

4 *Echium vulgare* 'Blue Bedder'
Blooming from May (from a September sowing), this small cultivar offers months of brilliant-blue flowers held on crowded spikes. Loved by pollinating insects. 45cm. AGM. RHS H7.

5 *Echium russicum*
A rather stark biennial with a wild, unvarnished magnetism. Sow in midsummer and plant in late autumn if soil is well drained, or otherwise in spring. Good in large sweeps of temporary bedding. 60cm. RHS H4, USDA 6a-8b.

6 *Euphorbia characias* subsp. *wulfenii*
Sturdy yet nimble, shrubby yet herbaceous, this euphorbia offers striking form and colour for much of the year. 1.25m. RHS H4, USDA 6a-8b.

7 *Rosa moyesii*
A rigid framework erupts into plentiful, modestly sized, deep-crimson blooms in early summer. Don't pinch off the spent flowers if you want to enjoy the flagon-shaped hips. 4m. RHS H6.

8 *Geranium pratense* 'Mrs Kendall Clark'
Violet petals, vividly veined with cream, sing out from a distance, whether this is allowed to self-seed in a meadow or used as a more deliberate collaborator. 60cm. AGM. RHS H7.

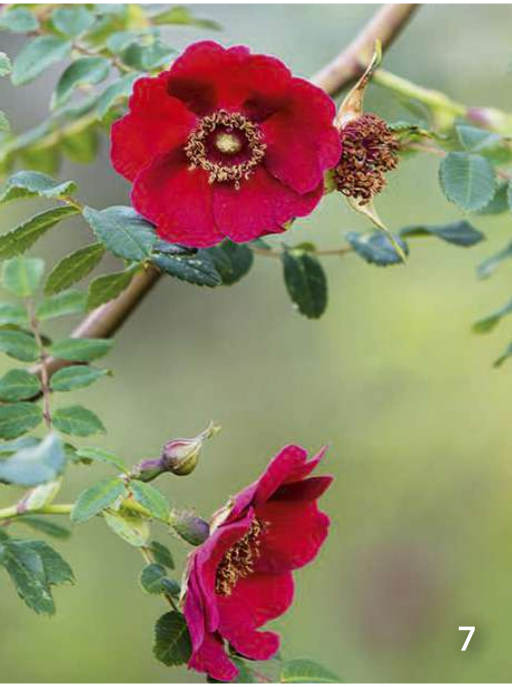
9 *Cupressus arizonica* var. *glabra* 'Blue Ice'
A vigorous cypress with wispy-looking, blue foliage, which brings a cool tone to a composition, and complements the periwinkle blue of *Aster* x *frikartii* 'Mönch'. 12m-plus. RHS H5.

10 *Sambucus nigra* f. *porphyrophylla* 'Eva'
Finely cut dark foliage, an elegant form and rich, plummy umbels in June make this an invaluable shrub. Its wingspan is impressive too. 3m. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 4a-7b.

11 *Abies lasiocarpa* var. *arizonica* 'Compacta'
Vivid-blue foliage is the primary asset of this small fir. Associates well with the equally compact *Euphorbia seguieriana* subsp. *niciciana*. 1m. AGM. RHS H7.

12 *Cirsium rivulare* 'Atropurpureum'
Wine-dark pompoms on branching stems make this dark-flowered form of the wild thistle a useful and semi-unpredictable, secondary ingredient in the garden. 1.25m. AGM. RHS H7.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. [†] Hardiness ratings given where available.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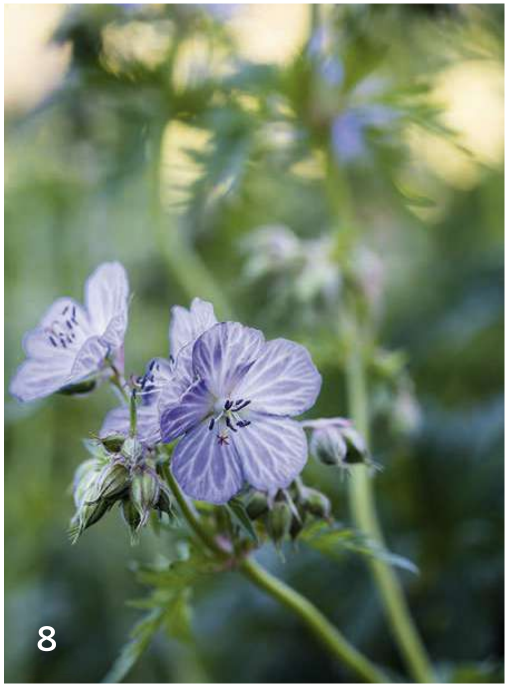
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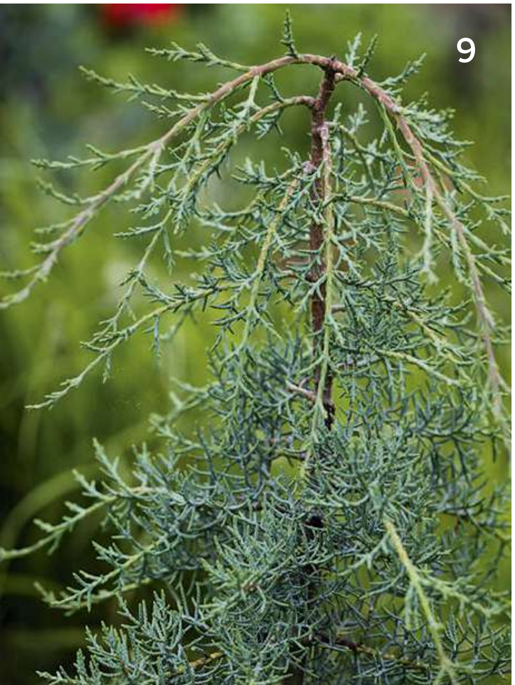
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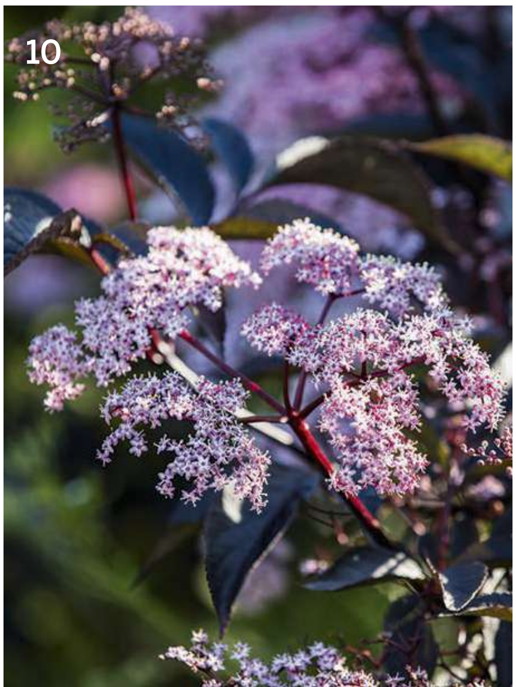
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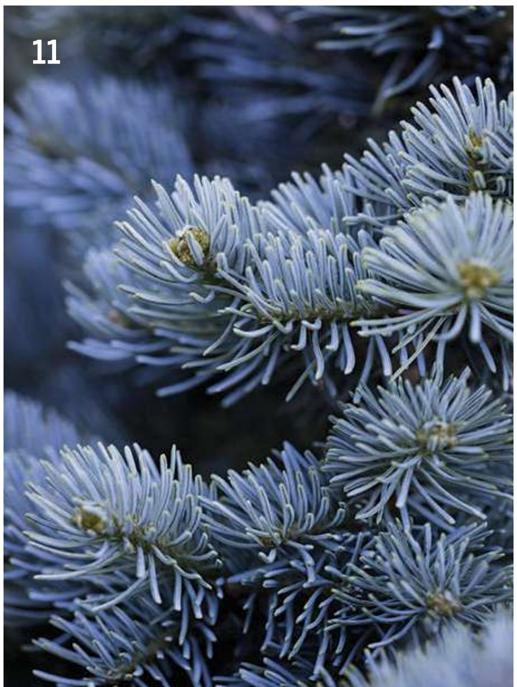
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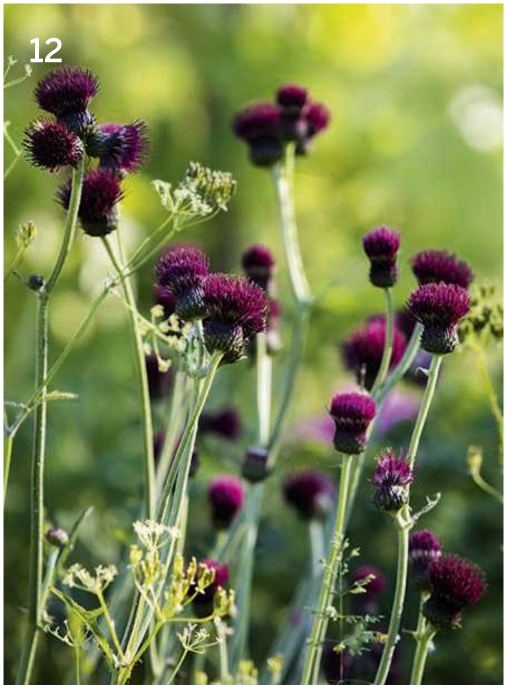
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▷ connects you with your surroundings and makes you more observant. It's good for the psyche."

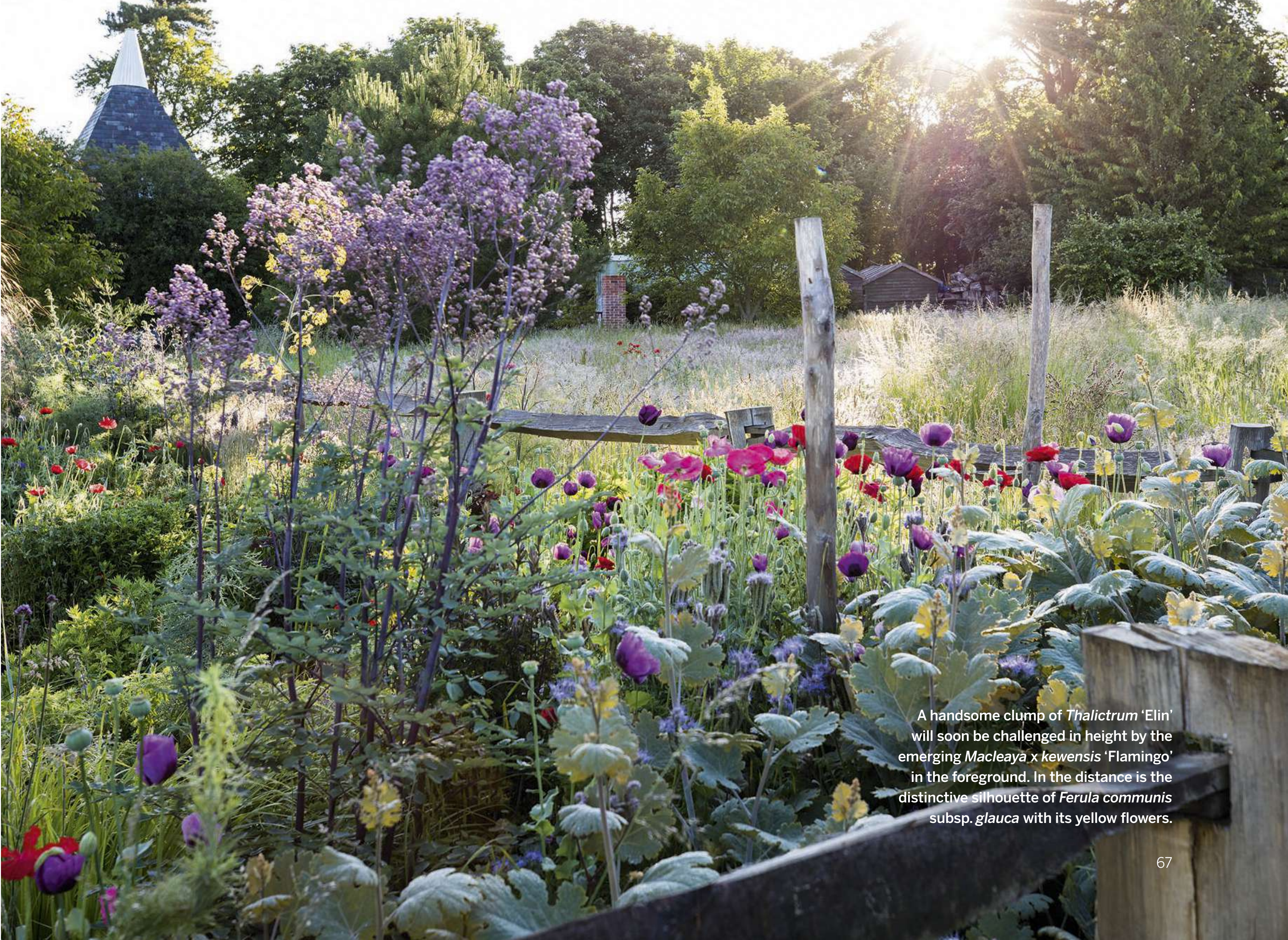
Having dug the entire plot by hand – a feat that took three months – Andy was left with a flat space ringed by a fence. He planted one of his favourite plants – the white-flowered *Anemone* x *hybrida* 'Honorine Jobert' – outside the front door and used that as a starting point, choosing its neighbours for their contrasting characteristics just as Fergus had taught him. Among others, he chose *Aconitum* 'Spark's Variety' for its deep-purple colour, *Persicaria amplexicaulis* 'Rosea' for its spiky habit and *Allium cristophii* for its earlier flowering season. It was, he says, "the most fun I've ever had".

In the border behind the house – one long, uninterrupted run – structure was paramount, so Andy planted trees and shrubs such as *Sambucus nigra* f. *porphyrophylla* Black Tower (= 'Eiffel 1'), *Ilex* x *altaclerensis* 'Golden King', *Pinus sylvestris* 'Aurea' and *Cedrus atlantica* 'Glauca Pendula' before placing other plants around them. He likes herbaceous perennials that are "good both in leaf and after they die back", citing *Calamagrostis brachytricha*, baptisias, bronze fennel and cardoons among his favourites. Bulbs such as snowdrops, winter aconites and alliums (*Allium* 'Gladiator', *Allium* 'Ambassador', *Allium hollandicum* 'Purple Sensation' and *Allium cristophii*) nestle among them, and September-sown annuals – ladybird poppies, *Echium vulgare* and cornflowers – add to the throng in early summer.

Maintaining a garden like this takes time. Thanks to his flexible working schedule, Andy estimates that, as the growing season picks up, he spends around 40 hours a week on various tasks. "It's a luxury to have all these plants outside my front door," he says. "I want to be out there working with them. Here, I feel connected to my environment in a way I never have in the city."

Just as Thoreau discovered that the city offers plenty of distractions but that these aren't necessarily the things that nourish us, so Andy believes that in making this garden he has become a new person. "I still can't believe this is where I live," he says. □

With gardening, you're working with nature directly. It's a living composition; there's something magical about it



A handsome clump of *Thalictrum* 'Elin' will soon be challenged in height by the emerging *Macleaya x kewensis* 'Flamingo' in the foreground. In the distance is the distinctive silhouette of *Ferula communis* subsp. *glauca* with its yellow flowers.

Changing spaces

The planting in designer Nicola Lesbirel's own garden may be constantly evolving, but the strong structure creates an overall feeling of cohesion

WORDS CAMILLA PHELPS PHOTOGRAPHS RACHEL WARNE

Designer Nicola Lesbirel's own garden has evolved over more than three decades. But one constant of this long, narrow, town garden, is that its layout is always primarily based around maximising the planting space. "I am plant-greedy," she says. "And I can't resist trying out new varieties."

Although she has never formally designed the garden, Nicola knew she wanted a space where she could hang out with family and friends in the late-afternoon sun, and have room for experimentation – the garden has pretty much become her 'plant laboratory'. "I needed to learn more about plants," she says. "So I dug up the lawn and the only space left to walk was down the middle." Hence a simple, straight, wooden path bisects sunny and shady borders. It leads from the paved terrace outside her garden flat, to the garden's newest feature: a cedar-clad, combined greenhouse and potting shed at the far end.

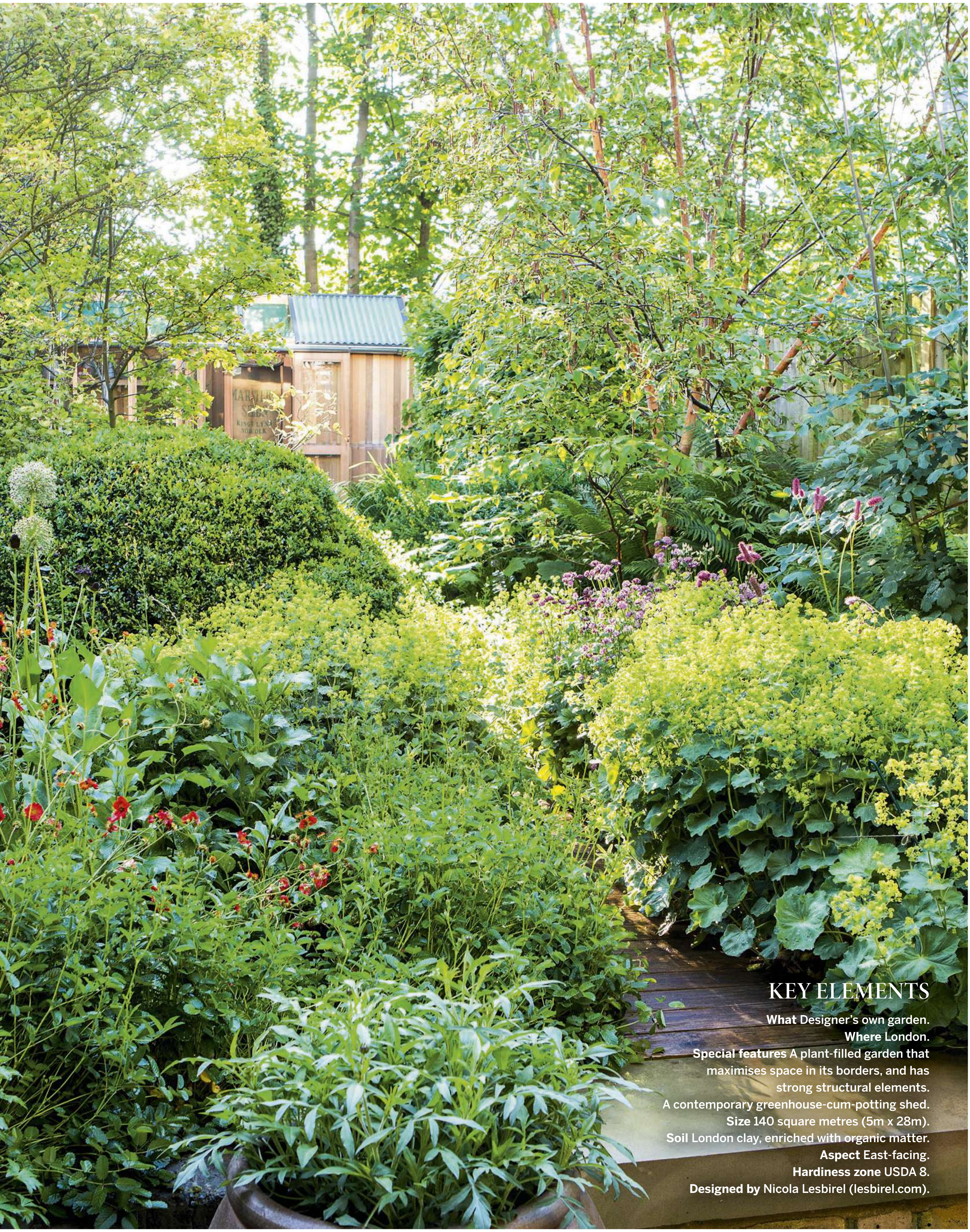
Nicola, who won a gold medal for her Laurent-Perrier garden at the 2003 RHS Chelsea Flower Show, spent three years working alongside Dan Pearson in his studio. This experience, along with her previous career as a designer and buyer at the Conran Shop, has influenced both the diversity of her planting in this small space and her choice of high-end landscaping materials. "I like very ▷

Nicola Lesbirel replaced the lawn in her narrow town garden with two deep borders separated by a wooden path.

Designing a small garden

Nicola's top tips for making a small garden feel bigger

- **Spend money on the best materials you can afford** for hard landscaping and this will stand you in good stead. If your garden has good bones, you can relax about the planting.
- **Don't mix too many different materials.** Create families of pots and group them so they are either the same size or have the same glaze, such as terracotta or salt glaze.
- **Think carefully about where you are going to place key plants,** such as specimen trees and shrubs. You can plant trees near to a house if the foundations are up to it.
- **The challenge is not how many plants to put in** but what to leave out. As a general rule of thumb, use a larger quantity of a few species, rather than small numbers of lots of different plants – you need to create focal points where the eye can stop, breathe and relax. Nicola likes to use controlled larger shapes, such as her 'hippos', as a foil for planting that can then dance in front.
- **Don't forget about the practicalities.** Take time with your soil preparation – this really is worth the effort. Also plan for storage and practicalities, such as your water supply, before you start planning the planting. And choose furniture that can live permanently outdoors.



KEY ELEMENTS

What Designer's own garden.
Where London.
Special features A plant-filled garden that maximises space in its borders, and has strong structural elements. A contemporary greenhouse-cum-potting shed.
Size 140 square metres (5m x 28m).
Soil London clay, enriched with organic matter.
Aspect East-facing.
Hardiness zone USDA 8.
Designed by Nicola Lesbirel (lesbirel.com).

> **I like very simple bones and good-quality materials. All the excitement needs to come from plants**

▷ simple bones, simple lines and good-quality materials," she says. "All the excitement needs to come from plants." And she has certainly packed in plenty of plants: five trees, perennials, grasses and ferns, salad and herb beds, and a cutting bed – she loves bringing fresh flowers from the garden into the house.

Three multi-stemmed amelanchiers offer seasonal delights throughout the year, while two betulas provide taller, feathery distraction and some privacy. Three voluptuous box plants, which she calls her 'hippos', create an evergreen backbone and a foil for airier plants. *Astrantia major* 'Star of Beauty', *Astrantia* 'Hadspen Blood', *Geum* 'Mrs J Bradshaw' and a froth of lime-green *Alchemilla mollis* add both colour and movement.

"I like collections of 'busyness' interrupted by a calm, quiet place," she says. To this effect, the timber fences are left mostly bare to create visual 'breathing space'. In peak season, taller summer perennials, such as *Digitalis purpurea* f. *albiflora* and *Sanguisorba menziesii*, provide a light camouflage. At the far end, tall hornbeam hedges on either side provide a sense of enclosure and frame the view back through the garden.

When she installed the greenhouse-cum-potting shed, Nicola sacrificed a view that stretched beyond the garden to a wild area. In losing this, she gained more space to nurture young plants and citrus trees, a home for her collections of sedums and vintage watering cans, and, most importantly, room for a comfy chair and a radio. "It's not a hard-working greenhouse – more of a grown-up Wendy house, really. It's amazing what you can cram into a small building, but it doesn't feel like a shed at the end of the garden. It's another space to hang out in." □

Clockwise from top left

The back door of Nicola's house opens on to a terrace of York stone, filled with container plants, which forms a calm dining area and a foil to the 'busyness' of her plant-filled borders beyond.

The raised beds for salad plants and herbs are hidden from the house by the lush planting.

Seen from above, the strong structure of Nicola's narrow town garden becomes evident and is dominated by the shaggy balls of box that she calls her 'hippos' and which act as a foil to her airy planting.

The cedar-clad greenhouse and potting shed is a new feature that allows Nicola to experiment with plants. Nicola took an existing design by Woodpecker Joinery (woodpecker-joinery.co.uk) and customised the design and fittings of the greenhouse to make it a bit more special.

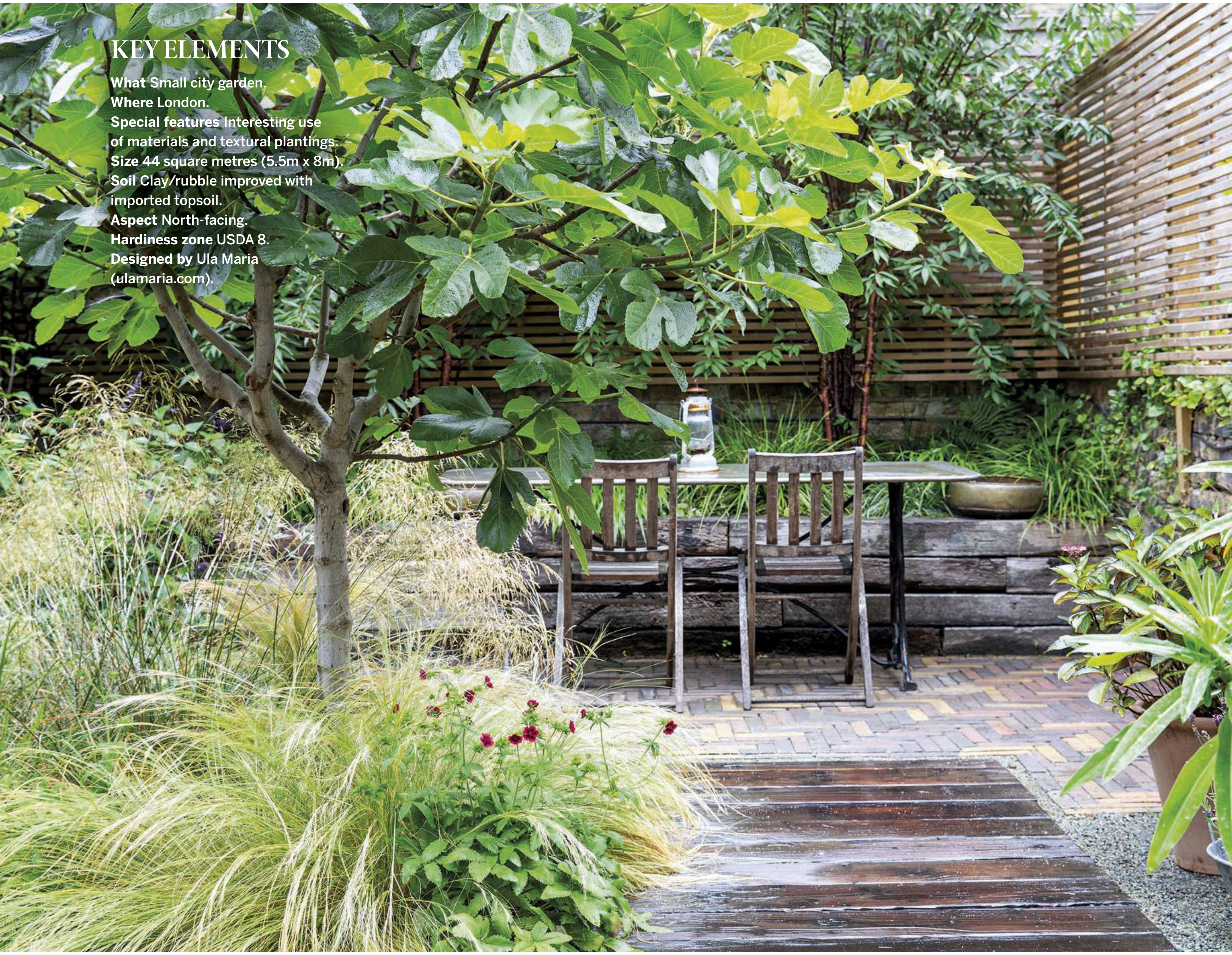
Nicola has placed chairs and a table outside her greenhouse-cum-potting shed to create a second seating area where she can relax and enjoy her garden.

Digitalis purpurea f. *albiflora*, *Astrantia major* 'Star of Beauty' and *Geum* 'Mrs J Bradshaw' bring colour, height and texture to the plantings in the borders.

Using different layers of planting, designer Ula Maria has created the space with soul her clients desired, full of contrast and character

A layered approach

WORDS **NATASHA GOODFELLOW** PHOTOGRAPHS **RACHEL WARNE**



KEY ELEMENTS

What Small city garden.
Where London.
Special features Interesting use of materials and textural plantings.
Size 44 square metres (5.5m x 8m).
Soil Clay/rubble improved with imported topsoil.
Aspect North-facing.
Hardiness zone USDA 8.
Designed by Ula Maria (ulamaria.com).

Some of us like a very ordered approach in our lives: a place for everything and everything in its place. Others prefer things to be a little more free and easy, with space for the unexpected. The young, creative owners of this garden fall firmly into the second camp.

Having been impressed by designer Ula Maria's work (among other accolades, Ula was RHS Young Designer 2017, winning a gold medal for her garden 'Studio Unwired'), they approached her in the hope that she could bring a similar sensitivity to their small, north-facing plot. "They didn't want anything too polished or perfect," says Ula. "They wanted it to have character and texture, to feel like it had soul."

There were some more tangible requirements too: the couple wanted space for a large dining table; they wanted the garden to have a contemporary feel with a sense of warmth in the materials; there needed to be a strong connection between indoors and outdoors; and the hope that the garden could be made to seem a little larger than it actually is.

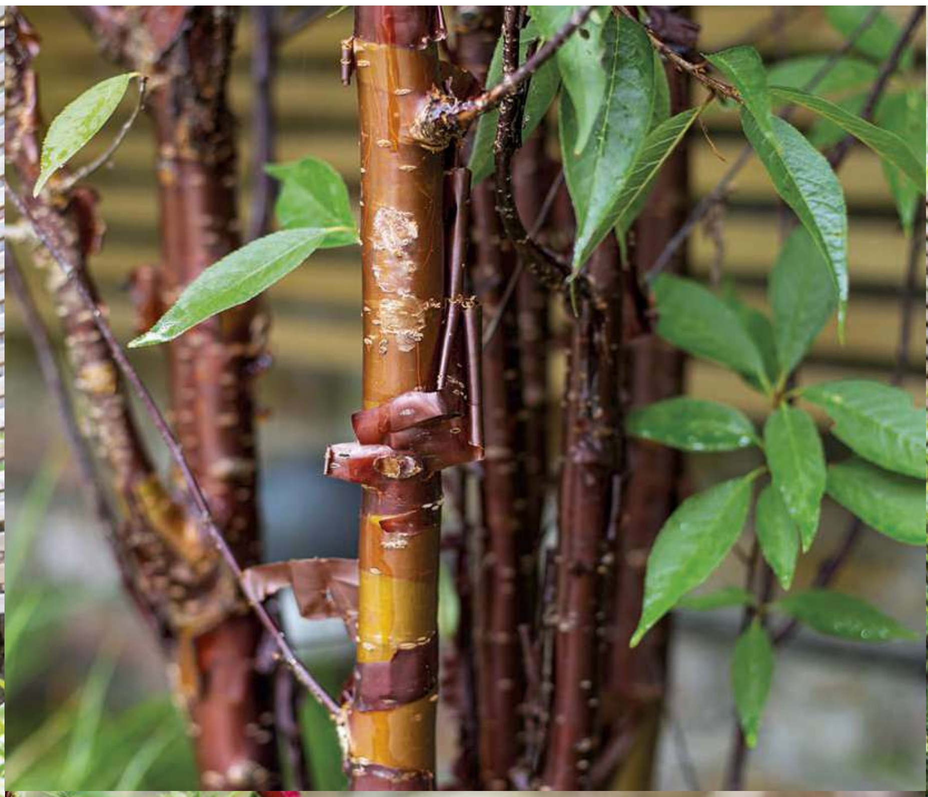
Ula had a blank canvas to work with. She took as her starting point the view from the kitchen, imagining the bi-fold doors as a frame within which to compose a picture. Pots fill the foreground; a striking fig tree (*Ficus carica* 'Brown Turkey') ▷

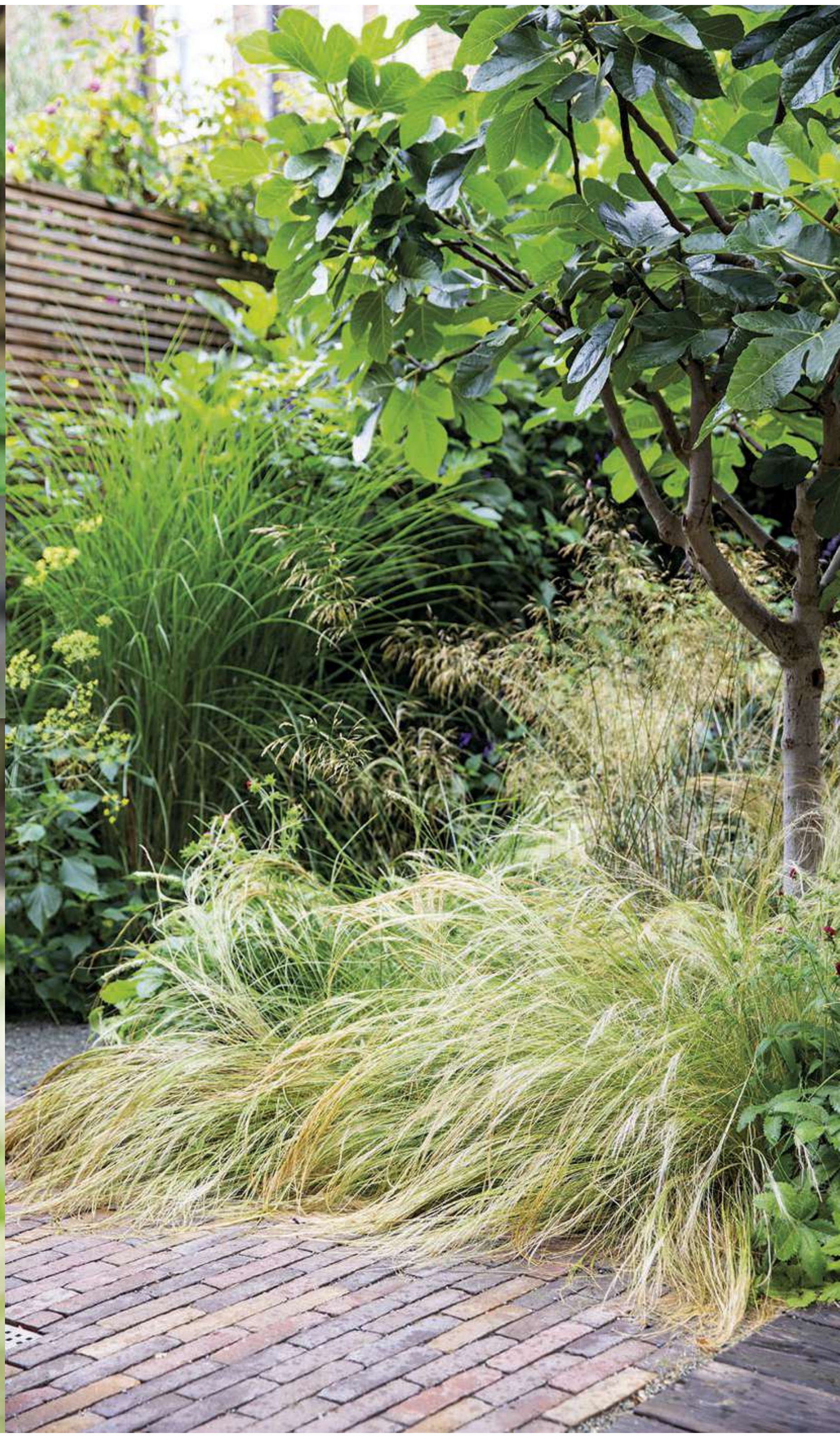
Clockwise from below left
Ula's design is very textural – note here the contrasting presence of the glossy-leaved fig, the breezy grasses and the small, narrow leaves of the Tibetan cherries at the back, a combination that also demonstrates the different layers of the garden. Alongside, slatted panels offer privacy but give a sense of space and airiness.

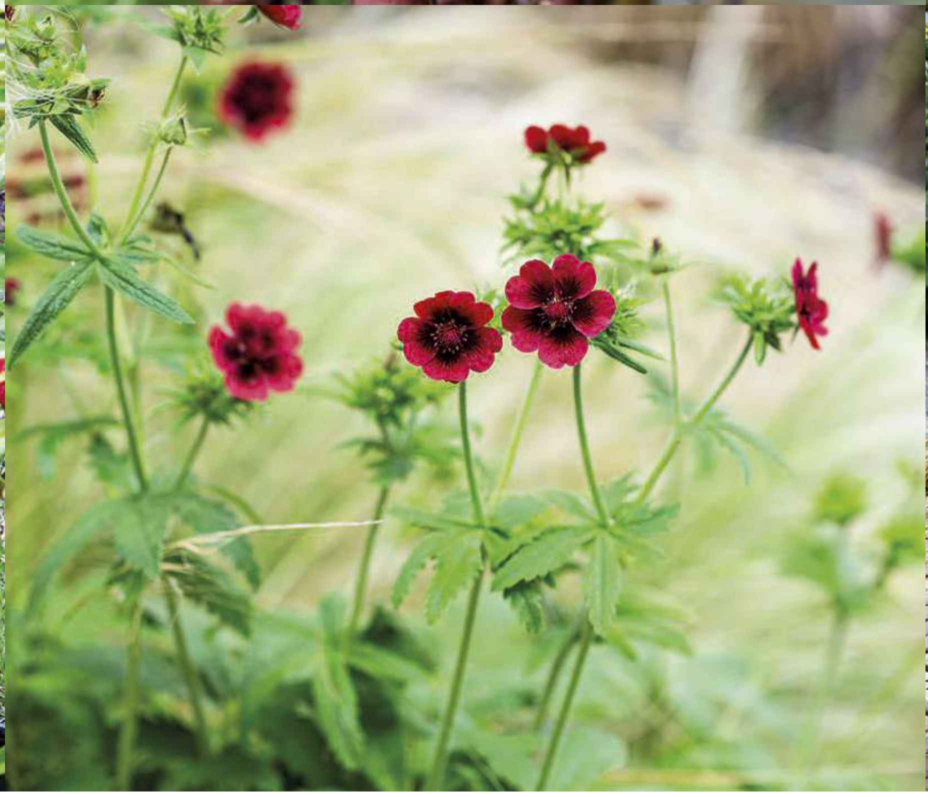
The attractive, coppery-brown bark of a Tibetan cherry tree *Prunus serrula.*

Stipa tenuissima nestles under a fig tree (*Ficus carica* 'Brown Turkey').

The dark-centred, raspberry-pink flowers of *Potentilla thurberi* 'Monarch's Velvet' add a dramatic splash of colour.





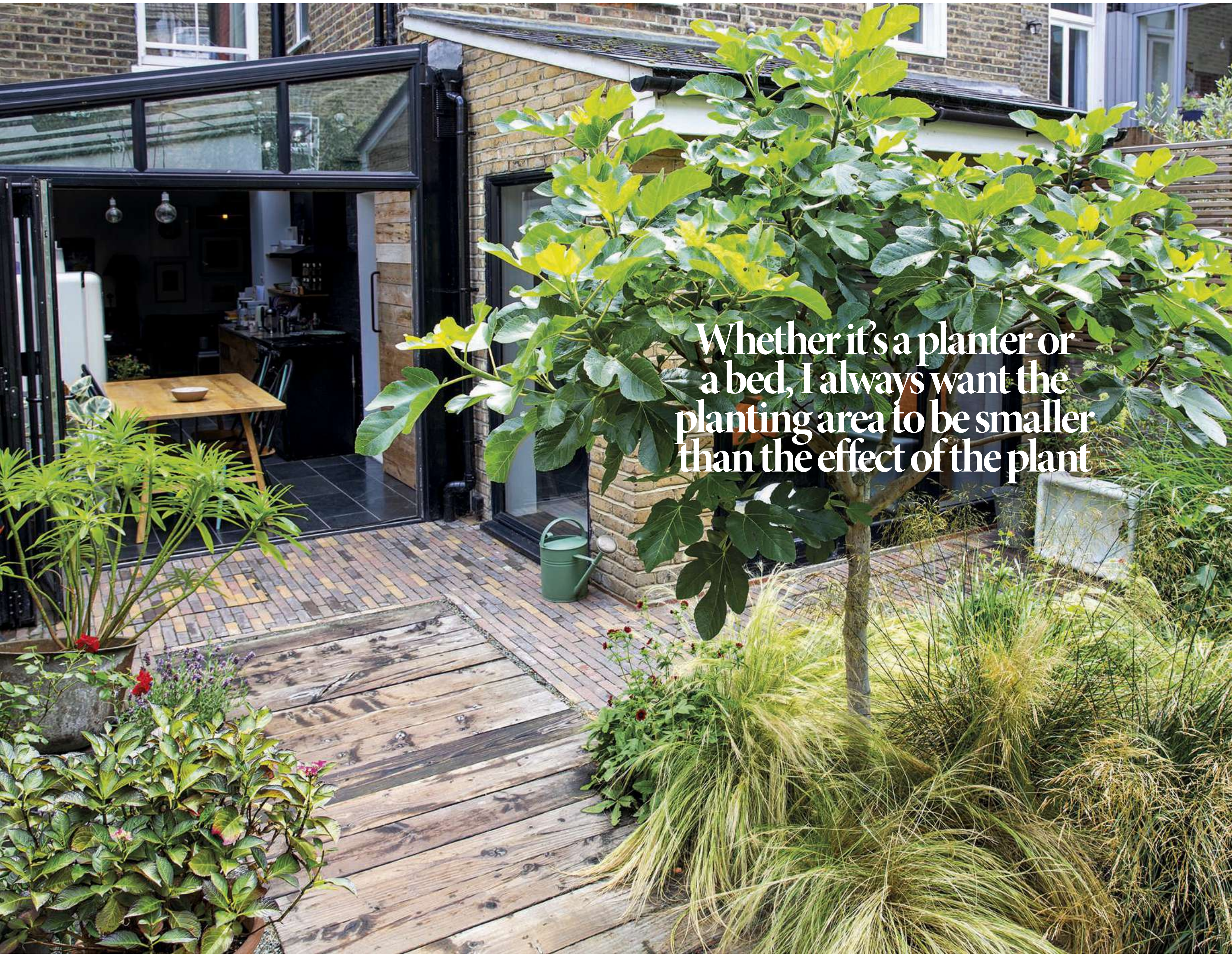


Below Ula used a combination of brick (laid in two different patterns), wood and gravel for the hard landscaping. This same wooden walkway featured in her 2018 garden at RHS Hampton Court Palace Garden Flower Show. Here she has imagined it as a bridge between the two brick areas. The garden is on the same level as the house, maximising the link between outside and in, and the architectural foliage of evergreen *Euphorbia mellifera*, with its bright-green, pale-veined leaves, makes a striking statement in a pot, alongside herbs and seasonal flowering plants.

▷ underplanted with matte, diaphanous grasses forms a voluminous mid-layer (which prevents the whole space from being seen at once); and a row of glossy-barked Tibetan cherries (*Prunus serrula*) stands at the rear to draw the eye beyond. These handsome multi-stemmed trees sit in a bed expertly constructed by landscaper Mark Whyman from old railway sleepers discovered during the build.

A common response in such a small space is to opt for a limited material palette, but Ula has instead used a combination of brick (laid in two different patterns), wood and gravel. "Normally I like to keep things simple, but here I really wanted to create a space rich with texture and interest," she says. Since the budget didn't stretch to a crane, every element had to be carefully considered to make sure it could be brought down a steep flight of stairs and through the flat.

For the contemporary feel the clients requested, Ula kept the design to clean-cut, geometric shapes – interlocking squares and rectangles – albeit with the edges considerably softened by the planting. "Whether it's a planter or a bed, I always want the planting area to be smaller than the effect of the plant," she says. "In this way, small areas of planting can absolutely transform a space and bring it to life." This was particularly noticeable to the clients. Having been present for much of the garden



Whether it's a planter or a bed, I always want the planting area to be smaller than the effect of the plant build, they were away the weekend the garden was planted. Ula reused several plants from her 2018 garden at RHS Hampton Court Palace Garden Flower Show. "As they were already mature, the change was dramatic – the clients just couldn't believe their eyes," she says.

The couple are still in touch with Ula, sending regular updates and pictures as the garden changes through the months. Narcissi and snowdrops herald the spring and then the space turns lush and green for summer, before taking on tints of browns and bronze in autumn. In winter the skeletons of the trees provide interest, along with the evergreen *Euphorbia mellifera* – one of Ula's favourite plants – in a pot. "I really enjoy seeing the seasons changing," says Ula. "It's so nice to celebrate that."

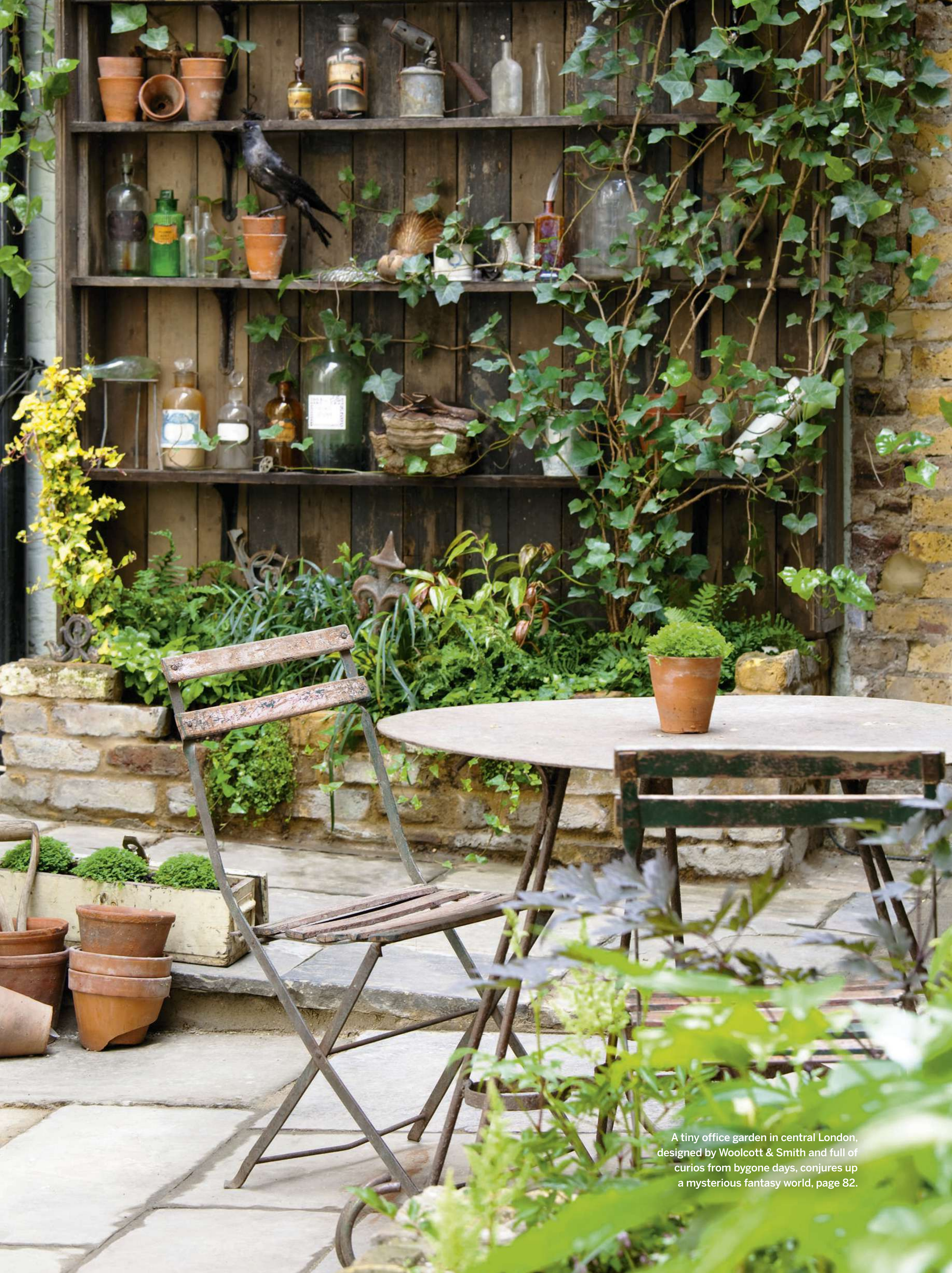
The growth rate of all the plants has been spectacular, but one in particular has exceeded all expectations. The salvia beneath the fig tree was supposed to be the relatively low-growing *Salvia* Love and Wishes (= 'Serendip6') but, judging by its colour, Ula believes that this may in fact be an especially vigorous *Salvia* 'Amistad' (it is now around 2m tall). "It always surprises me how fast things grow," says Ula. "Sometimes it can be a bit of a shock, but I'd much rather plants were abundant and happy than struggling." □

Clockwise from below left

This vigorous *Salvia* 'Amistad', which is now taller than the fig tree, is one from Ula's 2018 garden at RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show.

The Tibetan cherries are underplanted with *Hakonechloa macra*, all contained within a bed built from reused railway sleepers.

The striking golden flowers of *Deschampsia cespitosa* 'Goldtau' form a veil through which the sea holly (*Eryngium* x *zabelii* 'Big Blue') can be seen.



A tiny office garden in central London, designed by Woolcott & Smith and full of curios from bygone days, conjures up a mysterious fantasy world, page 82.

COURTYARD GARDENS

Thoughtful design, careful placement of objects and sculptures, and a good understanding of those plants that can thrive in variable light levels can transform the most compact of courtyards into a bijou outdoor haven

Contents

1 Creating an urban oasis
A soothing green palette in the heart of the city **page 78**

2 An exotic sanctuary
A hidden garden with an oriental flavour **page 80**

3 Curious and curiouser
A sense of wonder in the shade of evergreens **page 82**

RACHEL WARNE

Creating an urban oasis

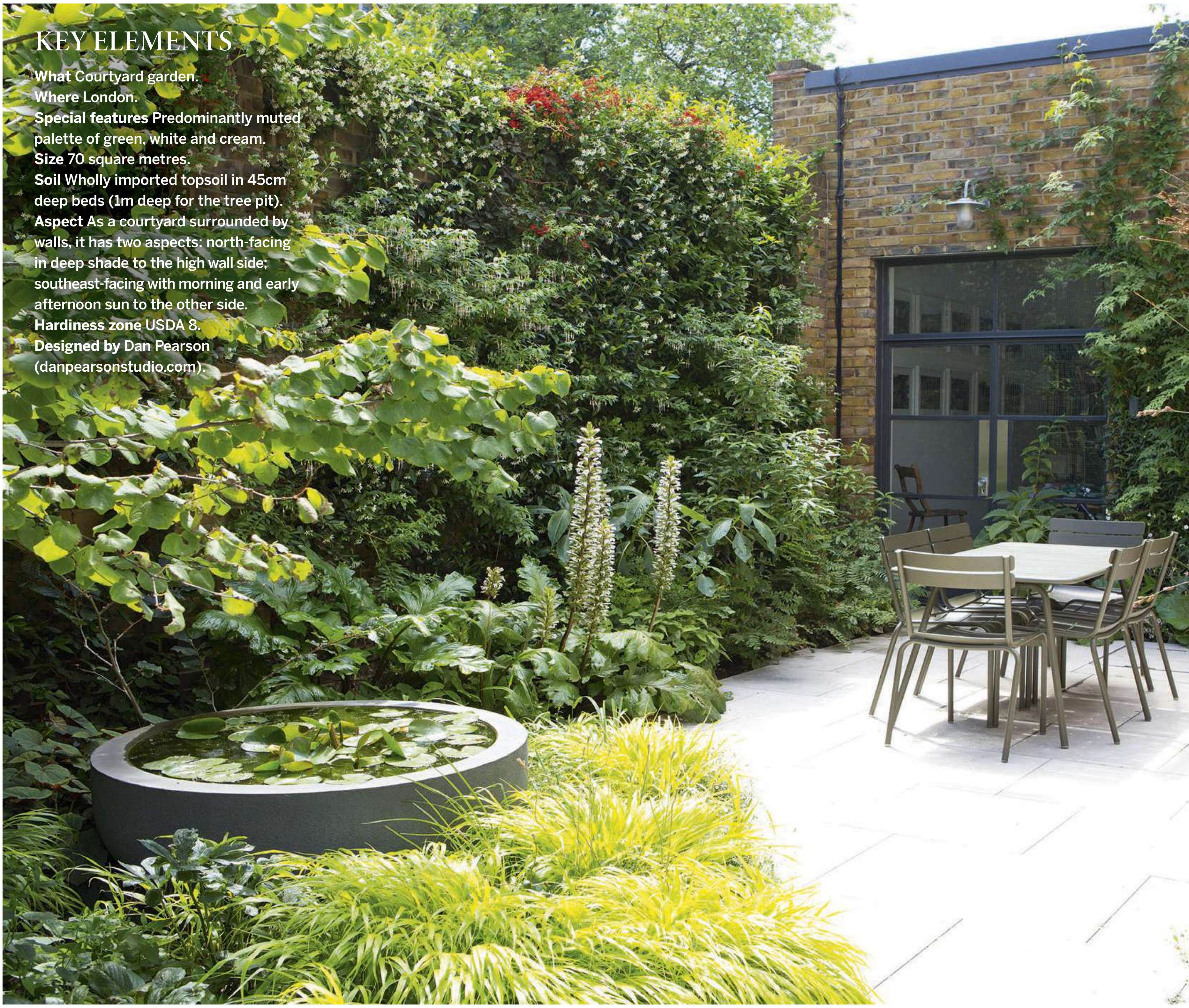
Dan Pearson's studio at Waterloo sits next to a busy street and is 20 metres above a rumbling undergound train line, yet it still manages to remain beautifully tranquil

WORDS JODIE JONES PHOTOGRAPHS RACHEL WARNE

Before Dan Pearson moved in, his Waterloo studio opened on to a kindergarten playground, complete with rubberised play surface, a shed for toys and one gloomy cherry tree.

Today, three lanes of traffic still thunder past outside, but in every other respect the space has been transformed. "It was important to get this right," says Dan. "It is a shop window for the business, but it also makes a real difference to the quality of life of all the people working here."

Today the 70-square-metre space radiates an air of calm. The plant palette is



KEY ELEMENTS

What Courtyard garden.
Where London.
Special features Predominantly muted palette of green, white and cream.
Size 70 square metres.
Soil Wholly imported topsoil in 45cm deep beds (1m deep for the tree pit).
Aspect As a courtyard surrounded by walls, it has two aspects: north-facing in deep shade to the high wall side; southeast-facing with morning and early afternoon sun to the other side.
Hardiness zone USDA 8.
Designed by Dan Pearson (danpearsonstudio.com).

deliberately muted and predominantly green. “A big part of the scheme was about having the right balance between hard and soft elements,” says Dan.

The dominant feature in the courtyard now is a fine, mature katsura, *Cercidiphyllum japonicum*. One of Dan’s favourite trees, it went in at great expense and with considerable physical effort. In a water bowl at its base live the waterlily *Nymphaea* ‘Marliacea Chromatella’ and a multiplying population of goldfish.

The planting along the shadier side of the garden is woodland based and quietly unusual. Arisaemas, trilliums, epimediums and rodgersias all feature as choice specimens. The sunniest part of the courtyard adjoins a neighbouring building so, rather than risk damp ingress, Dan kept the planting here in containers. He chose three enormous pots, which on close inspection reveal the same colour range as the bricks in the walls behind.

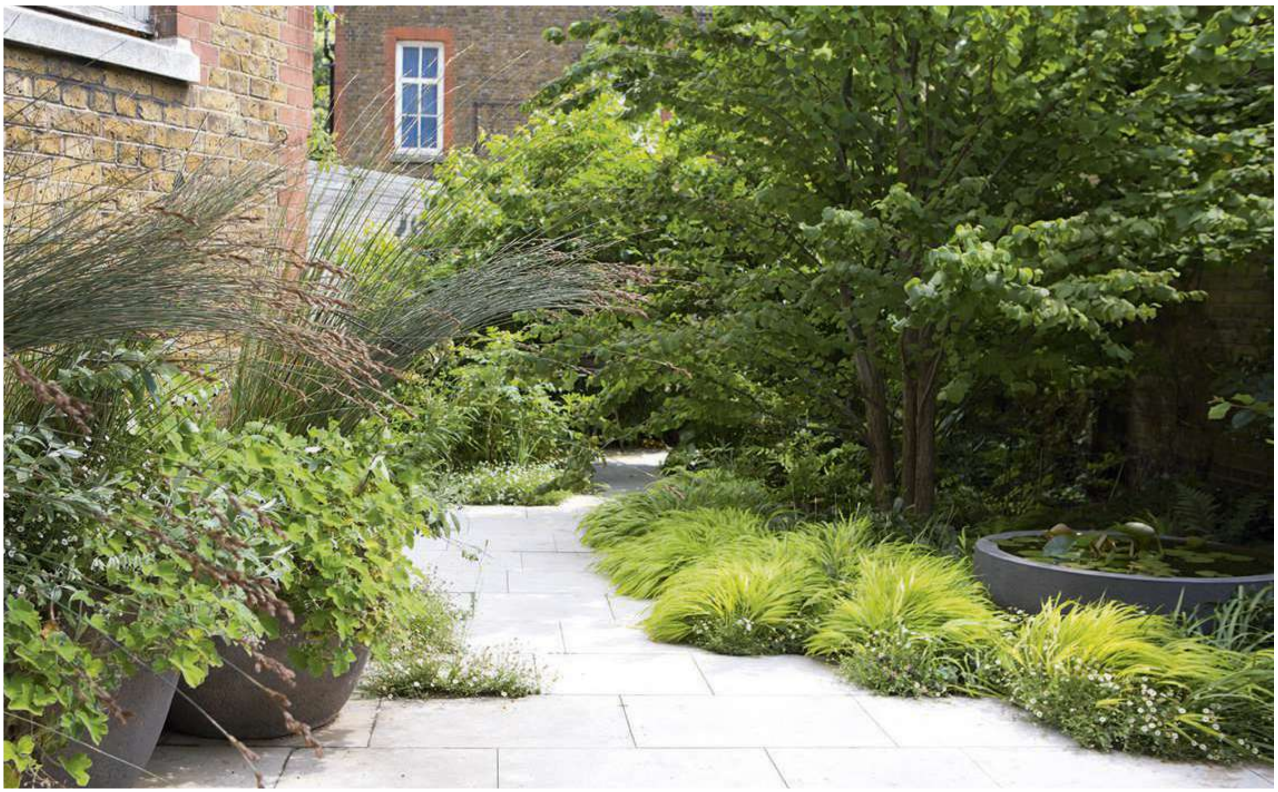
There are unexpected splashes of colour in the planting, too, including the vivid orange of *Papaver rupifragum* in spring and an eclectic selection of magenta, red and pink pelargoniums by the entrance door at the height of the season. “You don’t want everything to be too tastefully restrained,” says Dan. “That would be boring.” □

Clockwise from left

On the left the katsura tree arches over the water bowl, while on the right Dan fills large containers with restios and pelargoniums.

Hakonechloa macra ‘All Gold’ and *Erigeron karvinskianus* froth around the base of the water bowl. The planters opposite are filled with *Thamnochortus insignis* and underplanted with *Pelargonium tomentosum*.

Nymphaea ‘Marliacea Chromatella’ drifts gently in the water bowl.



Devising a blueprint for calm

A small garden in the city can still be a little patch of paradise. Here are some pointers to take from Dan’s courtyard space.

- **Choose pots that complement the surroundings.** Dan’s three large Sandblast Curved Planters, from Red Mud Hut (theredmudhut.co.uk), match the warm tones of the brickwork behind.
- **In an enclosed courtyard try to include still water.** The water bowl in Dan’s courtyard is from Urbis (urbisdesign.co.uk).
- **Buy the best garden furniture you can afford.** Dan chose Fermob furniture in the Luxembourg range in Savannah, from metallicgarden.co.uk
- **Screen utilities, such as bins and bike racks, from sight.** This can be done very effectively with soft planting.
- **Accept that you cannot completely block the sounds of the city.** Instead, use plants to engage the senses and deflect attention from the street noise beyond.

Transport yourself to a whole new world

- **Source one or two large plants** to get you going while you wait for your climbers to scramble up. Panni began with two large Chusan palms from Architectural Plants (architecturalplants.com).
- **Use mirrors leaned against the wall** to add light. Panni's mirror is a modern repro bought at Northcote Road Antiques Market in Battersea.
- **Plant evergreen climbers** for year-round consistency. Underused examples include *Holboellia latifolia* and *Muehlenbeckia complexa*.
- **Use outdoor fairy lights to draw the eye** into dark corners and add a sense of magic.
- **Use natural uprights** such as Panni's driftwood columns, sourced from a dismantled RHS Chelsea Flower Show garden, and add additional interest by placing statues or sculptures within the beds.
- **Be bold and plant exotic, large-leaved specimens.** Try Botanico (thebotanico.com) or The Palm Centre (palmcentre.co.uk).
- **Make light-catching mosaics** by leaving one of your slate squares open. Then smash a mirror into small pieces, fill the open square with concrete with black colouring added, and place the pieces of mirror into it to create your own mosaic design.

An exotic sanctuary

Photographer and designer Panni Bharti works tirelessly on her own refuge, a place where nature holds sway

WORDS JOJO TULLOH PHOTOGRAPHS RACHEL WARNE

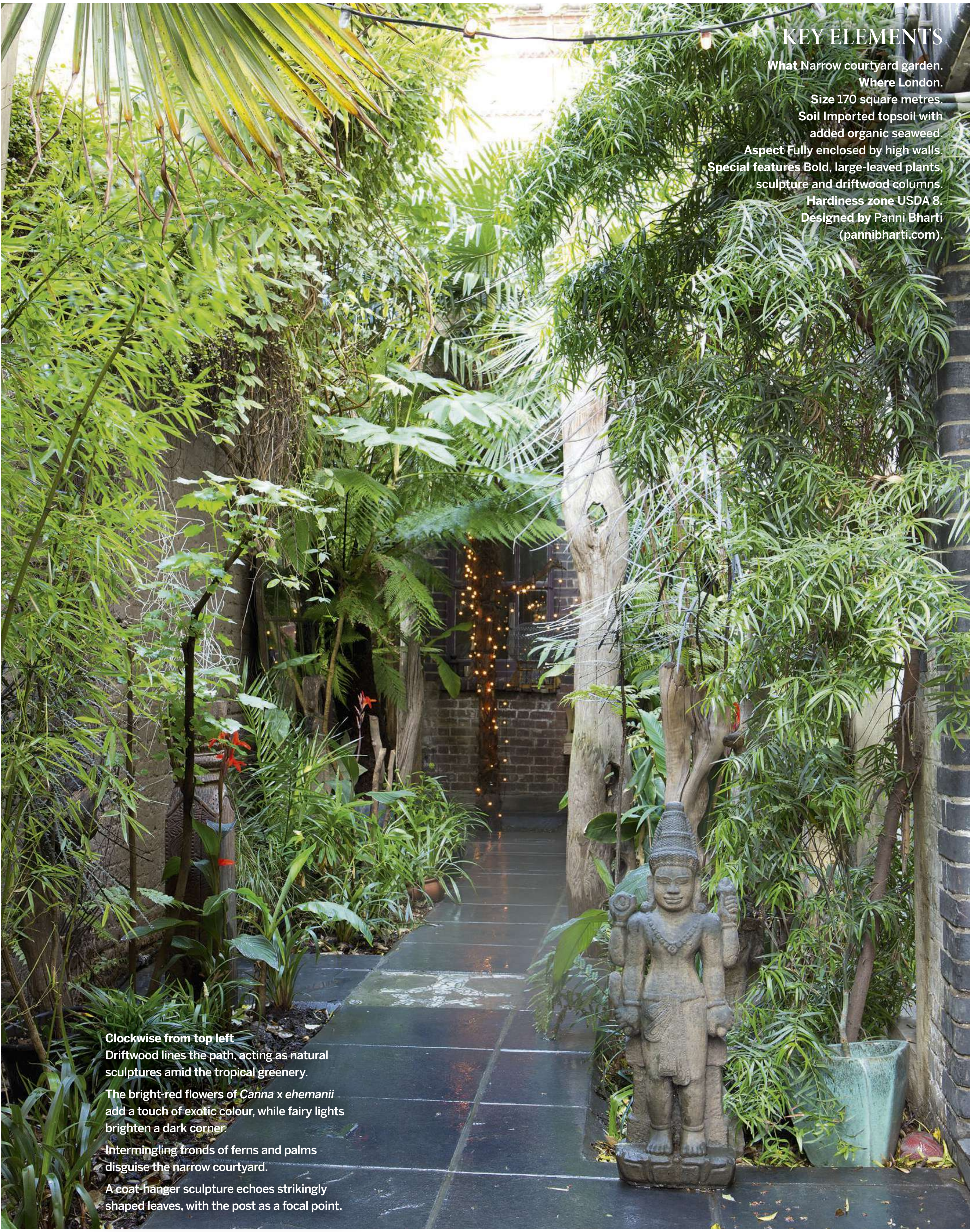
In the deep well formed by two Victorian warehouses, garden designer and photographer Panni Bharti has created a flamboyant and exotic sanctuary. The contrast between the glare and roar of nearby traffic and the forest-like tranquillity of this verdant slice of green is so intense it feels like magic. This is gardening as theatre; behind the large, wooden doors painted chocolate brown is a secret garden dancing with green light.

Large squares of black slate stretch from the gateway to the two-storey building. In the beds are vertical pieces of driftwood and sculptures of Buddha, but it is the scrambling climbers, palms, bamboos and ferns that draw the eye. Nature is in the ascendant.

At ground level you are encouraged to look up at the light cutting down through the bright-green leaves of *Acer palmatum* and the large-leaved *Tetrapanax papyrifer*. From inside the house looking down it's like floating in a sea of foliage. The scent of the evergreen jasmine is another important element. The main effect is of consistently attractive, evergreen foliage, but brief bursts of colour erupt like fireworks every July and August, when *Canna* x *ehemanii* lights up the dark, followed by the lemon-yellow flowers of *Hedychium gardnerianum*.

Outdoor fairy lights draw the eye into darker recesses. Shape is of utmost importance – the weird, saw-teethed leaves of *Pseudopanax crassifolius*, and the long, glossy, willow-like leaves of the slow-growing evergreen conifer *Podocarpus salignus*, stand out beside three driftwood posts sunk into a mosaic of mirror shards as if emerging from a light-reflecting pool.

Panni gardens with a sense of fun and flux, constantly moving things around and adding new elements. This is no sterile design project, rather the constantly evolving work of a very creative plant lover and artist. □



KEY ELEMENTS

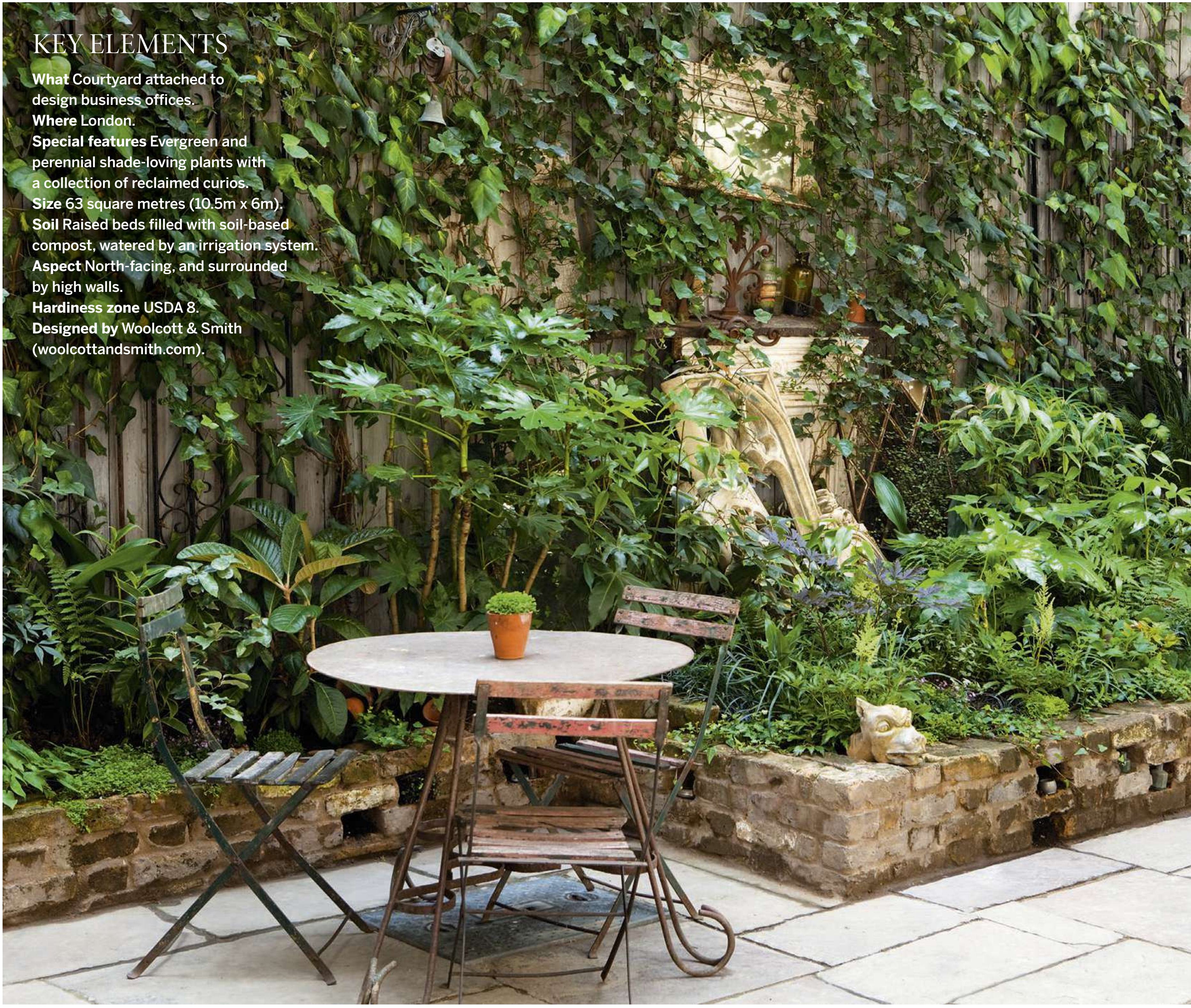
What Narrow courtyard garden.
Where London.
Size 170 square metres.
Soil Imported topsoil with added organic seaweed.
Aspect Fully enclosed by high walls.
Special features Bold, large-leaved plants, sculpture and driftwood columns.
Hardiness zone USDA 8.
Designed by Panni Bharti (pannibharti.com).

Clockwise from top left
Driftwood lines the path, acting as natural sculptures amid the tropical greenery.

The bright-red flowers of *Canna x ehemanii* add a touch of exotic colour, while fairy lights brighten a dark corner.

Intermingling fronds of ferns and palms disguise the narrow courtyard.

A coat-hanger sculpture echoes strikingly shaped leaves, with the post as a focal point.



KEY ELEMENTS

What Courtyard attached to design business offices.
Where London.
Special features Evergreen and perennial shade-loving plants with a collection of reclaimed curios.
Size 63 square metres (10.5m x 6m).
Soil Raised beds filled with soil-based compost, watered by an irrigation system.
Aspect North-facing, and surrounded by high walls.
Hardiness zone USDA 8.
Designed by Woolcott & Smith (woolcottandsmith.com).

Clockwise from top left
Among the evergreen shrubs are some more colourful surprises, including this unusual dwarf *Thalictrum kiusianum*.

Vintage tools and ephemera are as much a feature of the garden as the plants.

Actaea simplex 'James Compton' has richly coloured, purple leaves and, from late summer, fragrant, white flowers.

The shelves are crammed with vintage herbal and medical bottles.

The main feature of the courtyard is a raised brick bed. Backing it, the wall of the neighbouring building is clad with 100-year-old floorboards and covered with scrambling ivies.

Curious and curiouser

Botanical surprises and an array of reclaimed curiosities draw you into a world of intrigue and fantasy – all within a tiny, shaded courtyard

WORDS SORREL EVERTON PHOTOGRAPHS RACHEL WARNE

The tourists on Baker Street who come in search of a glimpse of a Sherlock Holmesian London should step away from the crowds and wander down a nearby side street. If they look carefully, they may just catch a glimpse down a darkened alleyway to a curious little scene: a rusty table with rickety chairs backed by a dusty array of apothecary's bottles, encroached by creeping ivy. Just the place to which fictional detectives Holmes and Watson might have retreated to analyse their clues.

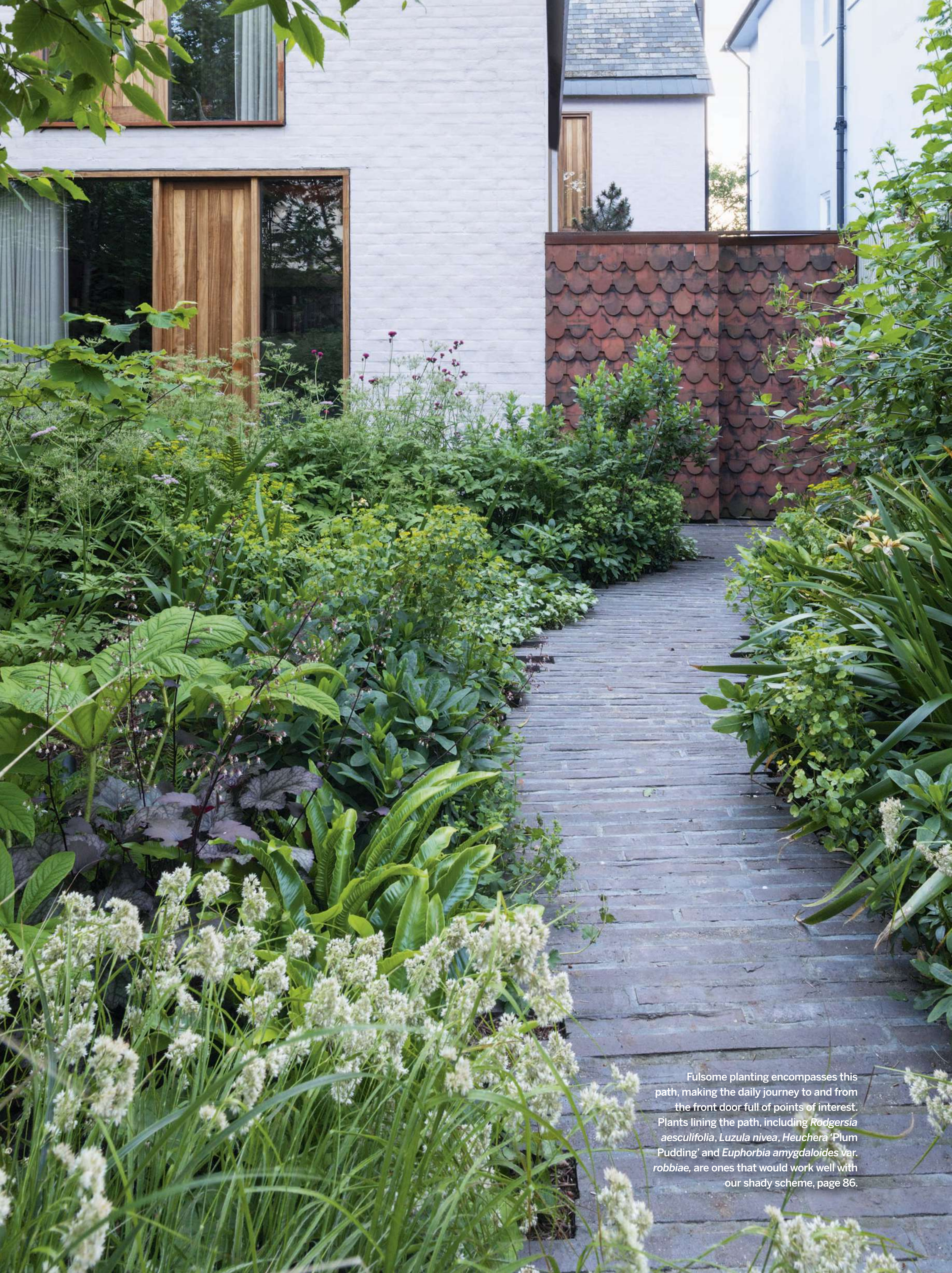
This sense of fantasy is exactly what owner Lucille Lewin wanted when she asked award-winning design duo Adam and Jon of Woolcott & Smith to create this tiny, office-based garden. "The building is an old school," explains Lucille, founder of the chic fashion brand Whistles, "and I wanted the garden to continue that story and to look as if it hadn't been touched for 150 years. I imagined the old science master here with his collection of objects and experiments."

Adam and Jon couldn't have asked for a more perfect brief. Known for their 'cameo' gardens at Chelsea, the opportunity to search reclamation yards for a range of relics is something they relish. "It needed to have a vintage chic appeal, with an emphasis on the quirky and fantastical," says Jon.

Everywhere you look, you spot another object – a door knob, a rusted key, fading herbarium specimens, an old cistern with an *Asplenium* fern growing from it, vintage tools – and the *Wunderkammer*, or cabinet of curiosities, lined with old glass bottles.

And the plants? "I didn't want anything conventionally pretty," explains South African-born Lucille. "I wanted lots of plants with interesting and contrasting foliage." The shady courtyard is suited to a predominantly evergreen palette with plants such as *Fatsia japonica*, sweet box (*Sarcococca confusa*), cycads (*Cycas revoluta*) and lots of ivies. "There are little surprises in there, too," says Jon – the odd snowdrop, a bluebell here and there, dwarf *Thalictrum* and *Actaea simplex* 'James Compton' with spires of white, scented flowers.

This may be a tiny space, but it's a garden packed with intensity and soul. □



Fulsome planting encompasses this path, making the daily journey to and from the front door full of points of interest. Plants lining the path, including *Rodgersia aesculifolia*, *Luzula nivea*, *Heuchera* 'Plum Pudding' and *Euphorbia amygdaloides* var. *robbiae,* are ones that would work well with our shady scheme, page 86.

FRONT GARDEN IDEAS

With many front gardens used as parking for cars, it's easy to overlook their greening potential. Here, two leading designers share their ideas for bringing dead spaces back to life

Contents

1 Shady
Verdant, layered planting of contrasting foliage **page 86**

2 Flowery
Daring planting against a framework of box **page 88**

3 Gravel
Heat-loving plants for a sun-drenched spot **page 90**

4 Country
Cottage plants mixed with seasonal treasures **page 92**

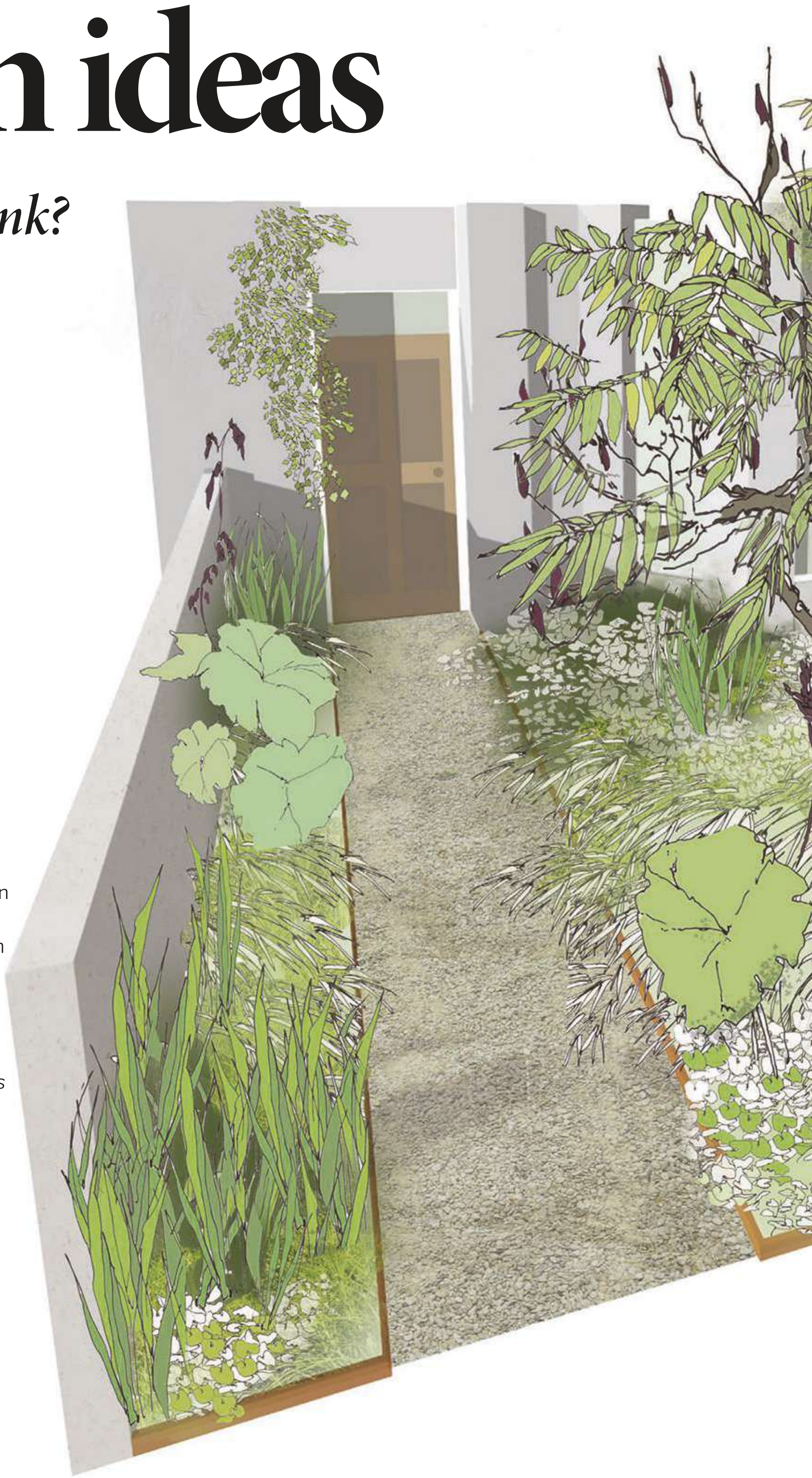
5 Town
Evergreen structure and attractive landscaping **page 94**

6 Coastal
Seaside plants to tolerate wind and salt-laden air **page 96**

RICHARD BLOOM

Front garden ideas

Does your front garden need a rethink? Designers Sarah Price and Annie Guilfoyle offer some inspiration in the form of six stylish designs packed with exciting plants



Shady

WORDS AND ILLUSTRATION SARAH PRICE

Shady and sophisticated, the rich, layered plantings of this scheme need a deep, moisture-retentive soil – so make sure to add plenty of organic matter when you are planting, and mulch every couple of years to maintain fertility. Rather than relying on extensive hard landscaping, this design lets the plants do the work, in a simple composition of evocative, strongly contrasting foliage forms.

It often helps to think of planting composition in layers, in a hierarchy of plant forms and texture. Starting from the highest, choose multi-stemmed large shrubs or small trees that will form a light overhead canopy, allowing light to penetrate to the understorey plantings. Birches are ideal, as are *Koelreuteria paniculata* and the ever-popular, year-round beauty *Amelanchier* x *lamarckii*. The clear stems will frame the garden scene, inviting you to pause, rest and look. The trees simply frame the space.

Astilboides tabularis forms the second foliage layer. Its bold, rounded, shield-shaped leaves contrast with the more delicate understorey of grasses, the dainty *Melica uniflora* f. *albida* or the richly textured *Hakonechloa macra*.

Confining the colour scheme to shades of green allows the foliage composition to be revealed and emergent bulbs to be appreciated. Similarly, well-chosen hard materials stand out dramatically. Corten steel, is popular for good reason, its rusty patina complements the green in this scheme, while red bricks can form strong patterning, emphasising key architectural lines or routes through the garden.

Planting options

A selection of suitable plants that would work with this design

Trees Clear-stem or multi-stem specimens of the following:
- *Acer griseum*
- *Amelanchier* x *lamarckii*
- Birches, such as *Betula pendula* or *Betula albosinensis*
- *Koelreuteria paniculata*
- *Magnolia* 'Elizabeth'
- *Rhus typhina* (contained)

Bold foliage
- *Astilboides tabularis*
- *Iris* x *robusta* 'Gerald Darby'
- *Onoclea sensibilis*
- *Polygonatum multiflorum*
- *Veratrum nigrum*

Groundcover
- *Asarum europaeum*
- *Epimedium* x *perralchicum* 'Fröhnleiten'

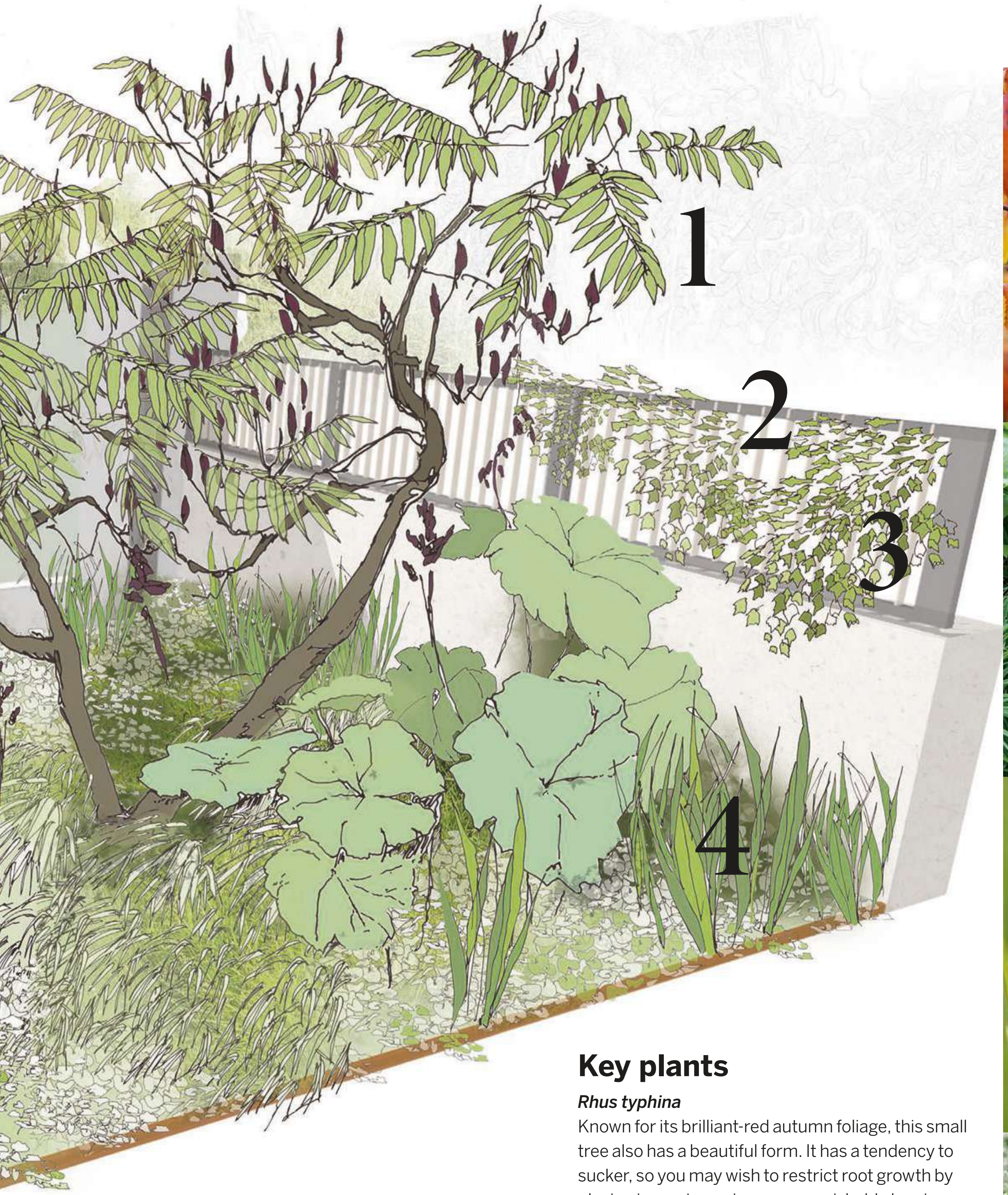
Grasses
- *Hakonechloa macra*
- *Melica uniflora* f. *albida*

1 A focal point

The beautiful form of a tree or multi-stemmed shrub creates a focal point to which all else is subordinate. If you already have trees in the plot, some thinning may be necessary to gain light and create a better grouping. If space is limited or the light too precious for a tree, a simple, large pot positioned with bold leaves will work well.

2 Simple lines

Any boundary treatment should be simple and bold, yet considered. Wooden lengths look good when crisply aligned and deliberately spaced.



3 Climbing plants

Use climbers to create a backdrop. Consider the shape of the leaf and the textural effect this creates. Less is often more, and your backdrop will look more coherent if you use just one or two species. Star jasmine (*Trachelospermum jasminoides*) is happy in sun or dappled shade, while the herbaceous hop *Humulus lupulus* 'Aureus' and the self-clinging *Schizophragma integrifolium* will cover shady walls with strong foliage patterns.

4 Woodland plants

Many woodlanders will appreciate partly shaded, humus-rich soil conditions. The spring-flowering *Fritillaria thunbergii* has narrow leaves and exquisite, pale yellow-green flowers. *Lilium martagon* var. *album* is similarly refined and will form a later succession of pale flowers to brighten the dappled shade. Select bulbs with fine foliage that will not look untidy after flowering.

Key plants

Rhus typhina
Known for its brilliant-red autumn foliage, this small tree also has a beautiful form. It has a tendency to sucker, so you may wish to restrict root growth by placing in a pot or using a non-perishable barrier around its roots. 7m. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b[†].

Astilboides tabularis
Works best as a dramatic single specimen. In summer, slender plumes of creamy-white flowers rise above large leaves. Like the other plants in this scheme, it prefers moist soil and indirect light. 1.5m. RHS H6, USDA 5a-7b.

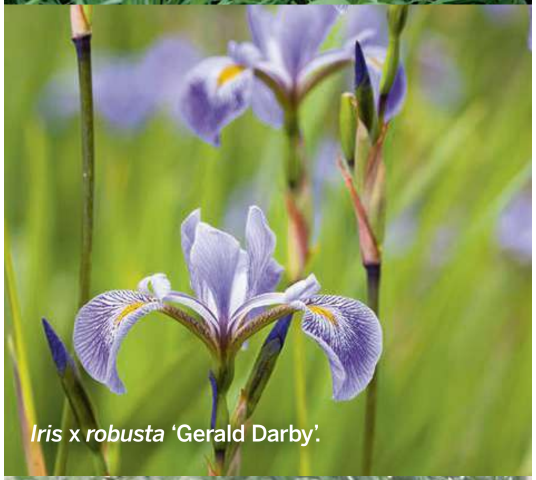
***Iris* x *robusta* 'Gerald Darby'**
Known for its beautiful, purple-tinged leaves in spring, this tall, iris has violet-blue flowers. For a shorter, evergreen alternative try *Iris lazica*, with purple-blue veined flowers in winter. Both prefer moist, deep soil. 90cm. RHS H7, USDA 4a-9b.

Melica uniflora* f. *albida
This grass has dainty sprays of pale-white buds that appear to float above delicate clumps of soft, green foliage. Flowers from early summer.70cm.

Asarum europaeum
This relative of wild ginger forms a low-maintenance groundcover in humus-rich soils that do not dry out in summer. Plant in light shade among spring bulbs. 15cm. AGM*. RHS H6, USDA 4a-7b.

Rhus typhina.

Astilboides tabularis.


Iris x *robusta* 'Gerald Darby'.

Melica uniflora f. *albida*.

Asarum europaeum.

RACHEL WARNE X 2; MCPHOTO / ROLF MUELLER / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; ABIGAIL REX / GAP PHOTOS; SEVEN75 / GETTY IMAGES.

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*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
[†] Hardiness ratings given where available.

Flowery

WORDS AND ILLUSTRATION SARAH PRICE

This is a cottage garden with a twist: a vivacious mix of vegetables, annuals, short-lived perennials, roses and hollyhocks, all contained in a strong framework of box. This scheme is about confidence and panache. It is a butterfly and honeybee haven and in high summer, the plants will grow tall enough to provide seclusion from the road.

The key to this look is that anything goes – as long as it's fun. Why not be daring? You could, for example, add the graceful, cultivated form of a stinging nettle – such as *Urtica dioica* 'Good as Gold' – which will both delight wildlife and will also certainly invite neighbourly curiosity.

The design principles are adaptable to any space in sun or part shade. A framework of box provides year-round structure and weight. The evergreen and ever-adaptable grass *Anemanthele lessoniana* intersperses the box, contrasting in form and habit.

For spring interest add generous plantings of daffodils and tulips and punctuate the grass with *Hesperis*, hellebores and foxgloves. These are tough plants that won't mind too much if they are shaded out later in the year.

Come late spring, a frantic race begins, and out of this richly textured and colourful lower stratum of species come the taller 'emergents', which add height and visual drama through the summer and into autumn. They set the character of the planting, and the list of potential candidates is almost endless.

Consider also flowering vegetables and herbs. *Rumex patientia* flowers in May and looks like a giant version of common sorrel. *Pastinaca sativa*, otherwise known as parsnip, creates a haze of yellow-green umbels that sing beautifully with pink poppies and roses. It remains attractive long after flowering, with its skeleton still standing.

If there's space, a few clumps of *Asparagus officinalis* 'Connover's Colossal' or, for the very brave, the magnificent *Ferula communis*, provide a dramatic alternative to the fine tracery of fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*).

The secrets of this front garden are the simple evergreen matrix of box and ornamental grass (*Anemanthele lessoniana*) that holds the scheme together, and that clashing colour can be good.

Planting options

A selection of suitable plants that would work with this design

Structure

- *Buxus sempervirens*
- *Crataegus laevigata*
- *Lonicera ligustrina* var. *yunnanensis*

Base matrix

- *Anemanthele lessoniana*

Spring interest

- Hellebores, *Hesperis*, geraniums, tulips, foxgloves

Giant emergents

- *Silphium laciniatum*
- *Verbascum lychnitis*

Perennial performers

- *Helianthus* 'Lemon Queen'
- *Urtica dioica* 'Good as Gold'

Annuals and short-lived perennials

- *Alcea rosea* single-flowered forms in mixed colours
- *Cleome hassleriana*
- *Cosmos bipinnatus* 'Purity'
- *Cosmos* mix
- *Geranium maderense* or *Geranium palmatum*
- *Helianthus annuus* 'Velvet Queen'
- *Helianthus debilis* subsp. *cucumerifolius* 'Italian White'
- *Nicotiana alata*
- *Nicotiana sylvestris*
- *Papaver somniferum*
- *Verbena bonariensis*

Herbs and vegetables

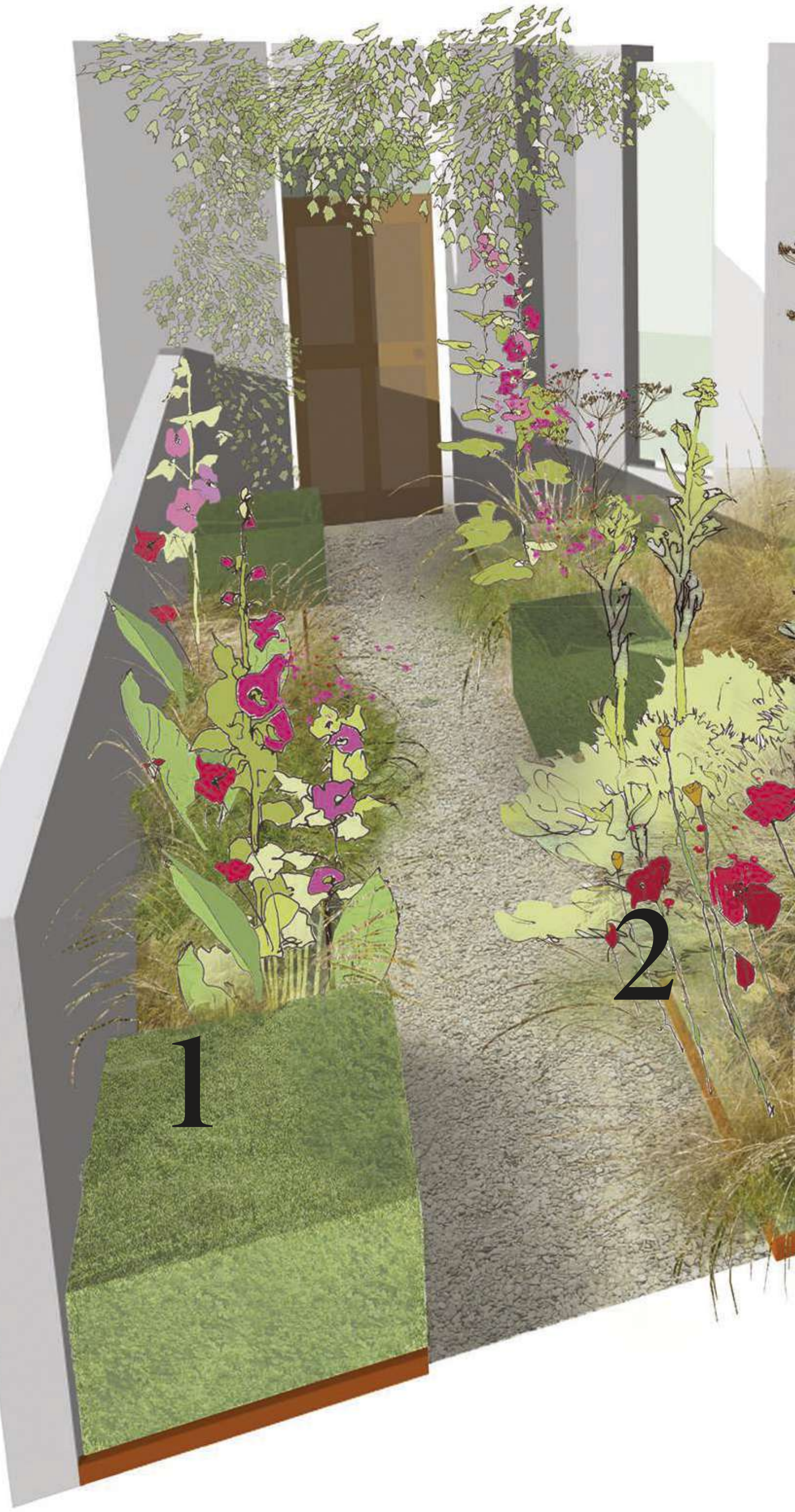
- *Asparagus officinalis* 'Connover's Colossal'
- *Atriplex hortensis* var. *rubra*
- *Ferula communis*
- *Foeniculum vulgare*
- *Pastinaca sativa*
- *Rumex patientia*

Roses

- *Rosa* x *odorata* 'Mutabilis'

Climbers

- *Clematis* 'Paul Farges'



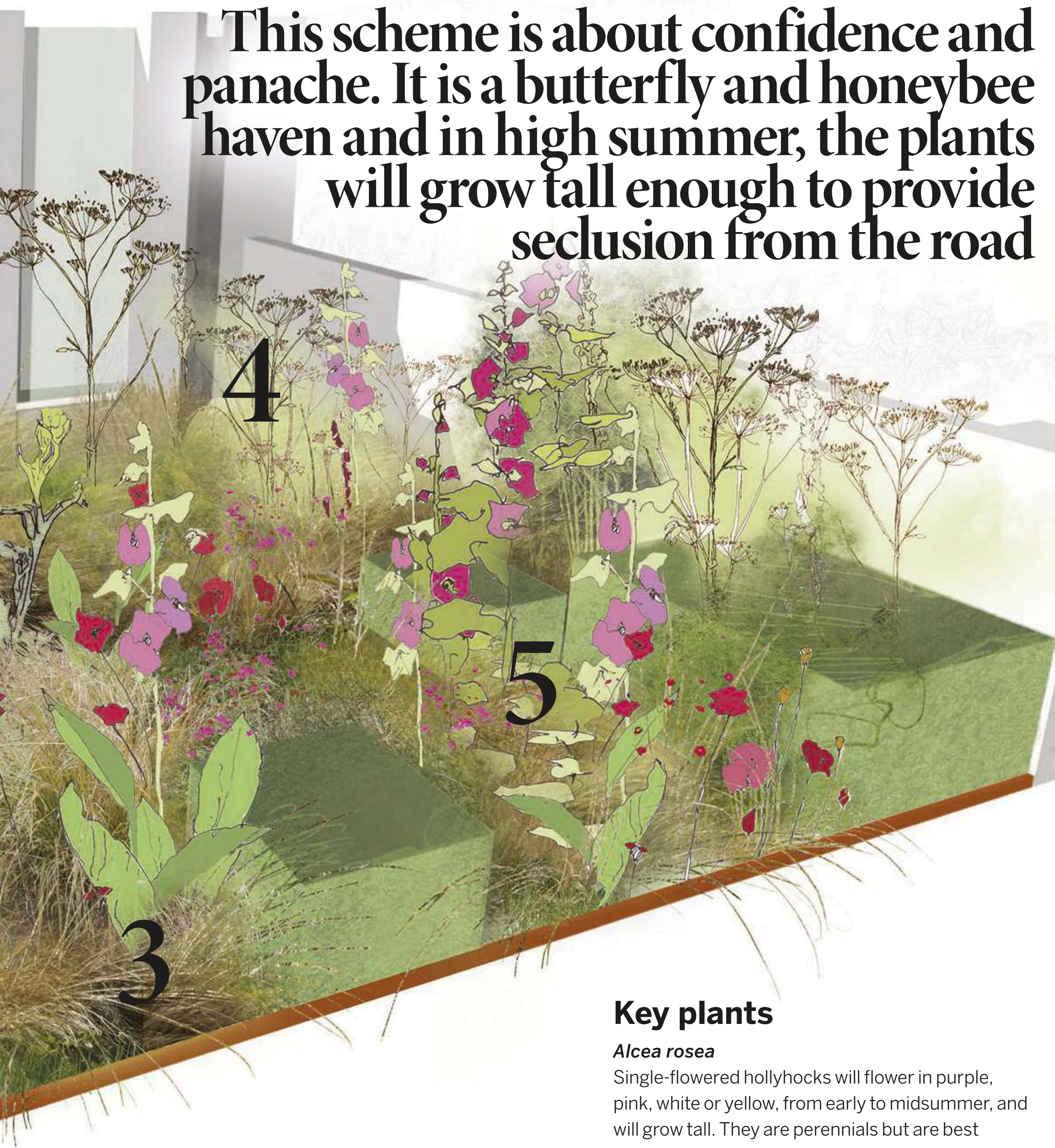
1 Evergreen structure

Box (*Buxus sempervirens*) provides an essential contrast to the exuberant planting. Consider experimenting with box hedging to create loosely clipped 'cloud' forms, or manicured domes of varying sizes. Alternatively other hedging materials such as hawthorn (*Crataegus laevigata*) or box-leaved honeysuckle (*Lonicera ligustrina* var. *yunnanensis*) could be used. Keep your approach simple and consistent as repetition of material and spatial form is needed to tie the scheme together.

2 Flowering annuals

Experiment with annuals for massed colour and scent. Try *Cosmos bipinnatus* 'Purity' and *Cleome hassleriana* alongside the beautifully fragrant *Nicotiana alata*. Consider treating short-lived perennial plants such as hollyhocks and *Verbena bonariensis* as annuals.

This scheme is about confidence and panache. It is a butterfly and honeybee haven and in high summer, the plants will grow tall enough to provide seclusion from the road



3 Grassy groundcover

Tough grasses such as *Anemanthele lessoniana* and forms of the native grass *Deschampsia cespitosa* will provide evergreen groundcover alongside a shaded perimeter or wall. These grasses are tolerant of foot traffic brushing past.

4 See-through plants

Plants with clear stems and fine foliage create greater opportunity for vertical layering as light is able to penetrate through to understorey plantings. The compass flower, *Silphium terebinthinaceum*, has golden daisies on self-supporting, naked stems that reach up to and over 2m. If you haven't the space, try *Nectaroscordum siculum* and the beautiful, tall, wiry-stemmed *Gladiolus* 'Ruby'.

5 Wildlife planting

Encourage butterflies (among other tiny yet important creatures) by planting a clump or two of *Urtica dioica* 'Good as Gold' among the grass matrix. This is my favourite stinging nettle – an especially elegant form with red-tinted stems and golden foliage.

Key plants

Alcea rosea
Single-flowered hollyhocks will flower in purple, pink, white or yellow, from early to midsummer, and will grow tall. They are perennials but are best treated as annuals and replaced each year to maintain vigour. 2.5m. RHS H5, USDA 2a-10b†.

Pastinaca sativa
Wild parsnip produces masses of yellow-green umbels from June, which stay standing, fading gradually from orange-brown to biscuit. Grow in a sunny spot – it won't tolerate shade. 1m.

***Helianthus debilis* subsp. *cucumerifolius* 'Italian White'**
Pale, creamy petals form a striking contrast to dark centres in this delicate sunflower. A deep-crimson, strong-growing alternative is *Helianthus annuus* 'Claret'. 1.5-2m.

Anemanthele lessoniana
Versatile and evergreen, this soft, arching grass (formerly *Stipa arundinacea*) will grow in sun and shade. Golden-pink trailing flowers are produced in late summer. In autumn the foliage takes on glowing shades of gold and copper. 1m.

Atriplex hortensis* var. *rubra
Red orache is a useful annual for drifting through new plantings, as the rich, purple foliage adds both volume and drama. It will self-sow but its bright, beetroot-coloured seedlings are easy to spot. 1.2m. RHS H2, USDA 2a-11b

Alcea rosea.

Pastinaca sativa.

Helianthus debilis subsp. *cucumerifolius* 'Italian White'.

Anemanthele lessoniana.

Atriplex hortensis var. *rubra*.

NIPASTOCK / GETTY IMAGES; STEFFEN HAUSER / BOTANIKFOTO / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; FLOWERPHOTOS / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; JASON INGRAM; CLARE GAINEY / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO.

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*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
†Hardiness ratings given where available.

Gravel

WORDS AND ILLUSTRATION SARAH PRICE

If you are lucky enough to have a front garden that benefits from being baked in sun, but it's one that currently resembles a concrete forecourt, then fear not. The conditions are perfect for creating gravel plantings, whose pools of aromatic colour are one of the most striking summer spectacles for the garden.

The essential ingredient is a mixture of 80 per cent grit and stone to 20 per cent loam and compost. Thin, lean, well-drained soils will prevent excessive lax plant growth and provide a competitive advantage for a variety of sun-loving plants.

As in the other schemes, the selection and balance of plant forms is essential. Here the rounded forms of low, evergreen shrubs form static anchor points around which an evolving troupe of sparky annuals and short-lived but free-seeding perennials mingles in variation. Plants such as thyme and *Sedum acre* weave ground-hugging compositions and patterns of their own among the deliberately positioned structural plants such as *Euphorbia epithymoides*, *Santolina pinnata* subsp. *neapolitana* and *Santolina rosmarinifolia*. Repeating clumps of the soft, flowing *Stipa lessingiana* emerge and mid-height 'fillers' such as *Dianthus carthusianorum*, *Saponaria ocymoides* and aromatic *Origanum* form low mounds of undulating colour.

Plantings of this kind often change dramatically with each season of seeding succession, so embrace serendipity and be prepared to be surprised. Approach weeding with a light touch and experiment with colourful seed mixes of poppies (including *Papaver*), love-in-a-mist (*Nigella damascena*) and evening primroses (*Oenothera*). Most of the plants are reliable and undemanding in the right conditions. They need no special care and, once planted, will flower and spread freely.

Add choice bulbs that are suited to the scale and delicacy of the plantings. Try dainty species tulips such as *Tulipa turkestanica*, *Tulipa sprengeri* and the golden lady tulip *Tulipa clusiana* var. *chrysantha*.

With this garden palette, there's no need to worry about watering while away for a summer break, though by going away you will risk missing the striking spectacle you've created. Never mind – the honeybees, butterflies and hoverflies will enjoy them.

Planting options

A selection of suitable plants that would work with this design

Giant emergent
- *Eryngium agavifolium*
- *Eryngium yuccifolium*
- *Ferula communis*

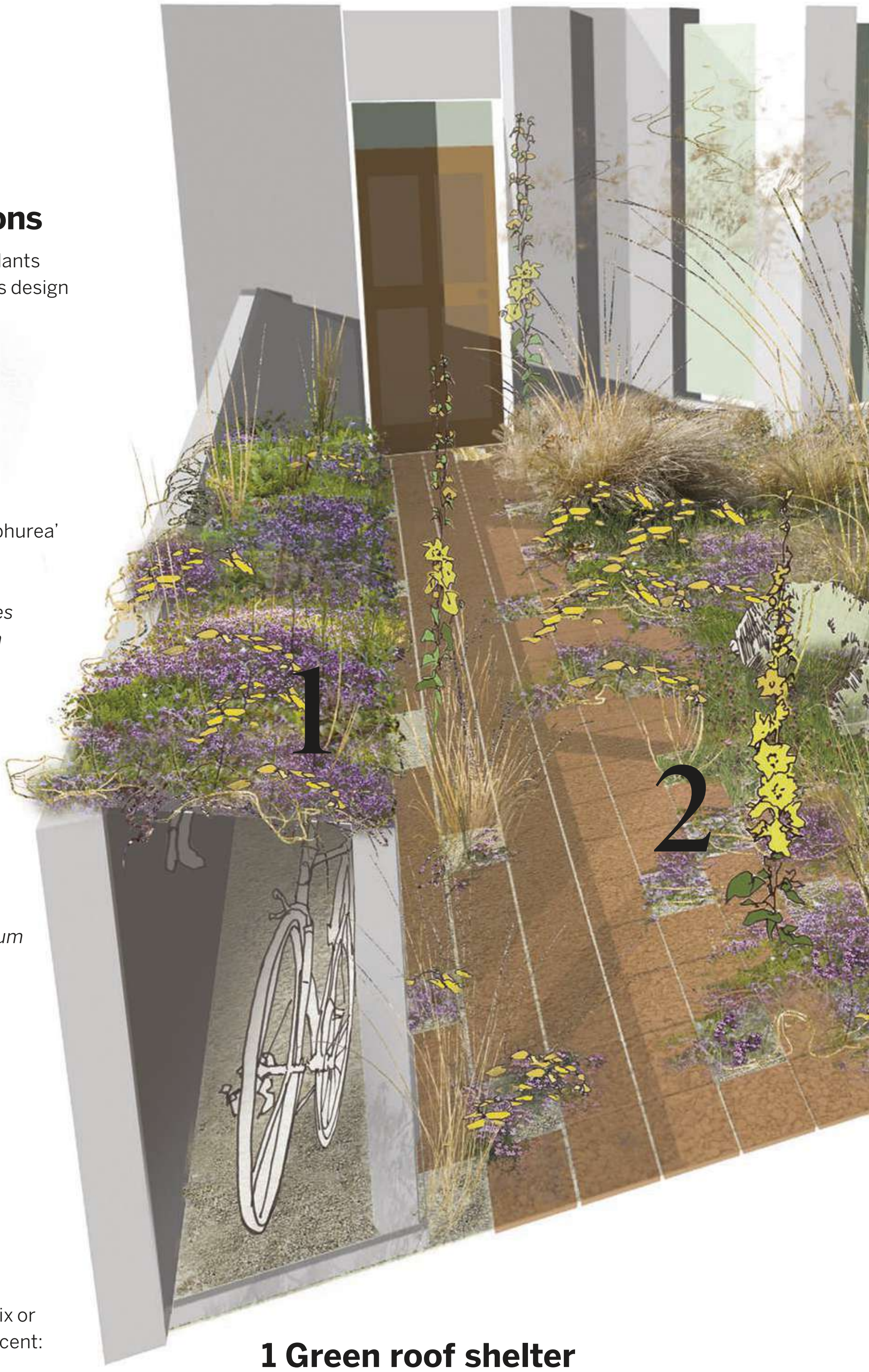
Emergents
- *Eryngium bourgatii*
- *Oenothera stricta* 'Sulphurea'

Structural mounds
- *Euphorbia epithymoides*
- *Geranium x oxonianum* 'AT Johnson'
- *Santolina pinnata* subsp. *neapolitana*
- *Santolina rosmarinifolia*

Low fillers and groundcover
- *Anthemis punctata* subsp. *cupaniana*
- *Dianthus carthusianorum*
- *Dianthus deltoides*
- *Erodium manescavii*
- *Origanum laevigatum* 'Herrenhausen'
- *Primula veris*
- *Pulsatilla vulgaris*
- *Saponaria ocymoides*
- *Sedum acre*
- *Sedum hybridum* 'Immergrünchen'
- *Thymus* species

Grasses
For a soft-textured matrix or occasional emergent accent:
- *Festuca amethystina*
- *Festuca glauca*
- *Festuca mairei*
- *Helictotrichon sempervirens*
- *Stipa lessingiana*

Bulbs suited to sun and free drainage
- *Muscari armeniacum*
- *Tulipa clusiana* var. *chrysantha*
- *Tulipa sprengeri*
- *Tulipa turkestanica*



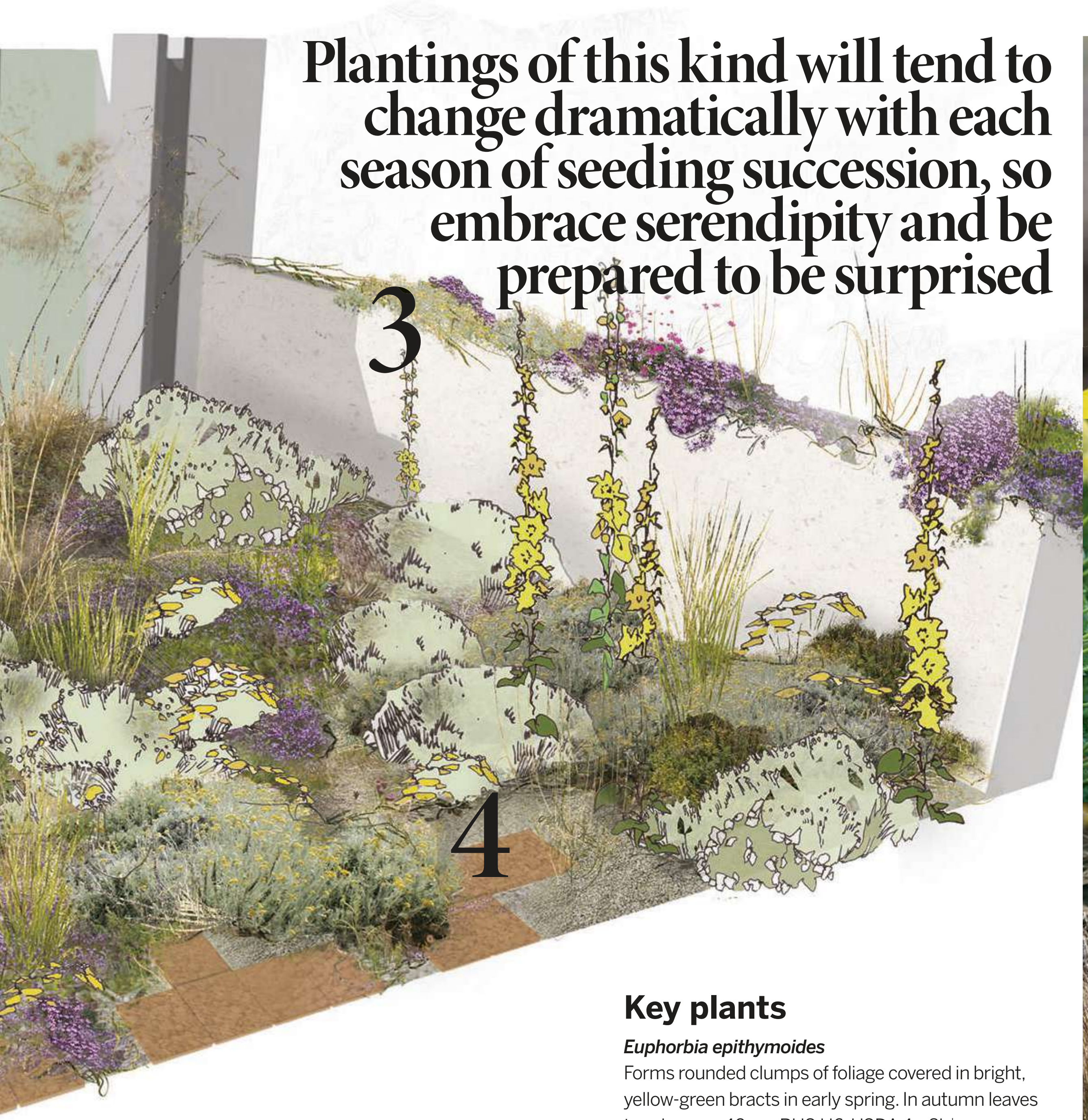
1 Green roof shelter

A simple wooden structure is all that is needed to create a mini green roof that will keep bikes out of the rain and hide unsightly dustbins. Build a simple wooden frame that will fit on top of a suitable structure, line it and fill with a drainage substrate. Add a thin layer of topsoil (for practical guidance see livingroofs.org). If you haven't the space for a mini green roof, take advantage of any cracks in the wall and allow crevice plants to take hold.

2 'Fragmented' paving

Use tiles or pavers to make an abstract ground pattern to be glimpsed through low mounds of planting. Concentrate paving around high-use areas such as the approach to the front door and make a pattern that seems to 'fragment' near the planting. If you need to park a car, two lines of paving slabs among the gravel will leave plenty of space. Many of the ground-hugging plants, such as thyme, will tolerate some foot traffic and can form a visual link between heavily used areas and the taller, more delicate plantings.

Plantings of this kind will tend to change dramatically with each season of seeding succession, so embrace serendipity and be prepared to be surprised



3 Tall plants

These introduce height and sculptural presence. *Ferula communis* works as a solitary giant in a larger space while sea hollies will add architectural detail at a more intimate scale. *Eryngium yuccifolium* and *E. agavifolium* are sea hollies with particularly strongly defined shapes, growing to 1m or taller. A suitable accent grass would be the striking blue oat grass, *Helictotrichon sempervirens*. Make sure these plants are well spaced, so that their form can be fully appreciated.

4 Self-seeding plants

Gravel is visually recessive and forms a quiet, textured background, allowing the plants to take central stage. It is also the perfect environment for opportunist plants to self-seed in. Slice any unwanted weeds out with a kitchen knife and deadhead any plants that are too generous with their seeds before they spill them.

Key plants

Euphorbia epithymoides
Forms rounded clumps of foliage covered in bright, yellow-green bracts in early spring. In autumn leaves turn bronze. 40cm. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b[†].

Santolina pinnata* subsp. *neapolitana
A hardy evergreen shrub with pale-yellow button flowers in summer and aromatic, silvery-grey, feathered foliage. 50cm. RHS H5.

Stipa lessingiana
Upright clumps of fine, bright-green leaves and delicate, cream flowers that gradually turn buff. Stands well into winter. 75cm.

Saponaria ocymoides
This perennial forms a spreading mat of pink flowers in summer. It tolerates dry conditions so should be at home on top of walls and on the roof of the cycle store. 10-15cm. RHS H5, USDA 2a-9b.

Dianthus carthusianorum
Magenta flowers on upright stems above clumps of grassy leaves. Fantastic inter-planted with low grasses. 40cm. RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b

Ferula communis (not pictured)
Giant fennel flowers from June to August. Sulphur-yellow umbels are held on sturdy flower spikes above finely textured foliage. 3m.

Tulipa clusiana* var. *chrysantha (not pictured)
Excellent for naturalising. Petals are flushed crimson on the outside and yellow inside. Plant deeply in a warm, sheltered position. 25cm. RHS H6, USDA 3a-7b.

Euphorbia epithymoides.

Santolina pinnata subsp. *neapolitana*.

Stipa lessingiana.

Saponaria ocymoides.

Dianthus carthusianorum.

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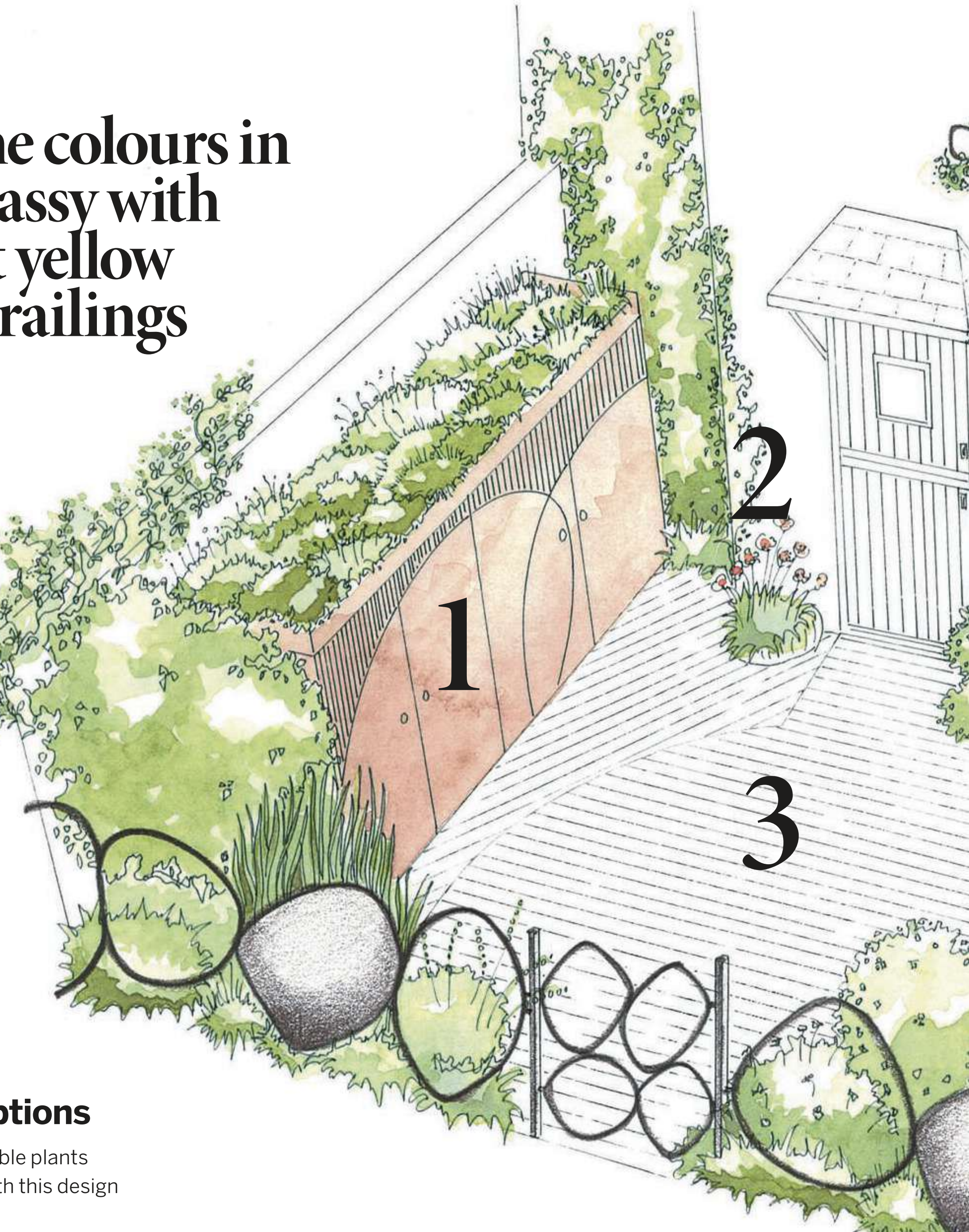
[†] Hardiness ratings given where available.

JASON INGRAM X3; BAILEY-COOPER PHOTOGRAPHY / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; FEDERICA GRASSI / GETTY IMAGES.

Not for the faint-hearted, the colours in this scheme are bold and brassy with pink, bright orange and hot yellow colliding, alongside quirky railings and directional paving



Country

WORDS AND ILLUSTRATION ANNIE GUILFOYLE

When designing gardens, inspiration can be drawn from everything around you. In this country garden two of my favourite influences combine, with dashes of the garden at Great Dixter in East Sussex meeting the sublime 1950s textile designs of Lucienne Day. Not for the faint-hearted, as the colours are bold and brassy with pink, bright orange and hot yellow colliding together. The use of quirky railings and directional paving means it may not be everybody's cup of tea.

However, beyond the crazy colours I have selected some really outstanding plants that will command attention and even possibly adoration. *Edgeworthia chrysantha* has lemon drops of flowers so richly scented in midwinter that it will uplift even the weariest soul. *Neillia thibetica* ensures the garden will be buzzing with bees and butterflies in early summer. *Clematis* are indispensable, perfect for providing vertical impact in confined spaces.

Most of the plants in this garden enjoy a moist but well-drained soil and with this in mind I have placed gravel strips between the junctions of the paving. This provides a perfect location for exciting seasonal treasures that require good drainage, such as *Tulipa* 'Cornuta', *Rhodohypoxis deflexa* and *Crocus angustifolius*. These little gems will happily hold their own against the bolder plants, heralding the changes in season.

Planting options

A selection of suitable plants that would work with this design

Bold and vibrant colours
- *Agastache* 'Tangerine Dreams'
- *Berberis thunbergii* 'Pow-wow'
- *Clematis* 'Jackmanii'
- *Echinacea* 'Art's Pride'
- *Euphorbia myrsinites*
- *Geranium psilostemon*
- *Helianthemum* 'Henfield Brilliant'
- *Rhodohypoxis deflexa*

Plants to make the neighbours stop and stare
- *Clematis* 'Vince Denny'
- *Edgeworthia chrysantha*
- *Neillia thibetica*
- *Rhaphiolepis indica*

Show-stopping bulbs
- *Allium cristophii*
- *Nectaroscordum siculum* subsp. *bulgaricum*
- *Tulipa* 'Cayenne'
- *Tulipa* 'Cornuta'

Great for green roofs
- *Sedum spurium*
- *Sempervivum arachnoideum*

Roses
- *Rosa* 'Madge'
- *Rosa* 'Zéphirine Drouhin'

1 Bin and bike storage

The storage area should be easily accessible from the house and gate. A green roof softens the visual impact. Planted with sedums, it requires little maintenance.

2 Doorstep planter

Instead of using the doorstep planter to hide the door key, make more of it. It's the perfect place to have a moveable feast of seasonal bulbs or tender plants.

3 Ramped paving

New-build dwellings should comply with regulations that allow for wheelchair access. Ensure that the ramp is non-slip by using textured stone.

4 Plant support on the wall

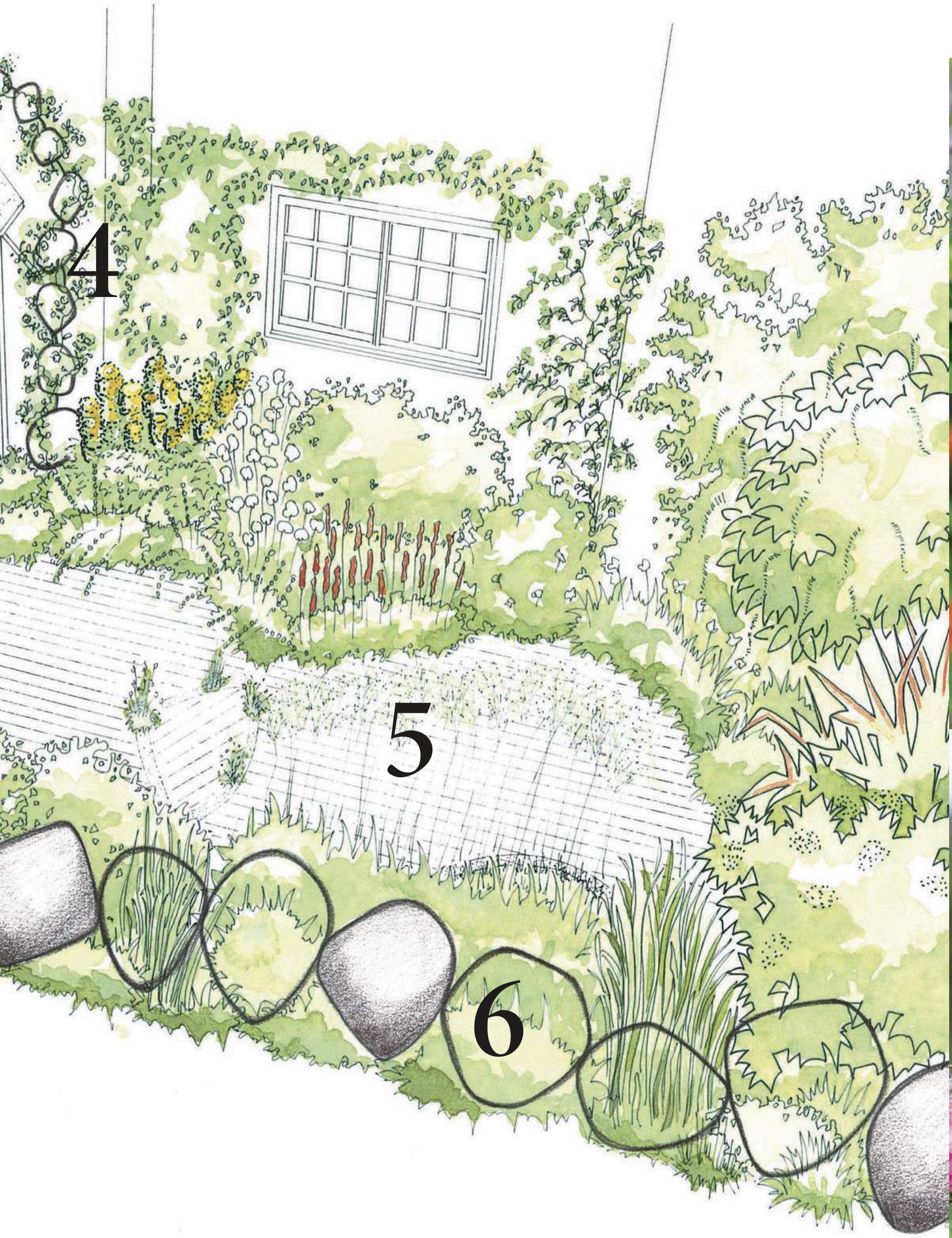
Conventional trellis can look dreary. This metal wall sculpture adds individuality and provides a stylish support for a beautiful rose.

5 Directional paving

Use diamond-sawn sandstone cut in long lengths, then change the direction of the paving or vary the width to create a subtle effect without looking too fussy.

6 A statement fence

Forged iron railings inspired by 1950s textiles make a funky fence. It may not stop the dog escaping, but it will stop passers-by in their tracks.



Allium cristophii.

Crocosmia x *crocosmiiflora* 'Babylon'.

Tulipa 'Cornuta'.

Rosa 'Zéphirine Drouhin'.

Crocus angustifolius.

Key plants

Allium cristophii
Alliums are easy to grow. Heralding early summer, these large purple orbs look wonderful when punctuating the border. Magnificent seedheads follow. 60cm. AGM*. RHS H5, USDA 4a-8b†.

***Crocosmia* x *crocosmiiflora* 'Babylon'**
Great plants are often maligned. The leaves emerge early and it flowers all summer in a mouth-watering mix of bright orange-red with a brownish centre. 90cm. AGM. RHS H4, USDA 6a-9b.

***Tulipa* 'Cornuta'**
An elegant flower with sharply pointed petals of red and yellow. You will understand why it's called the fire flame tulip. 50cm. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

***Rosa* 'Zéphirine Drouhin'**
A stunning, pink, climbing rose, which is very popular due to the lack of thorns. Richly scented, it will tolerate light shade but does need good air circulation. 4.5m. RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

Crocus angustifolius
Crocuses offer a splendid show of spring colour. This scented species is a rich gold, flushed with mahogany stripes. 10cm. AGM. RHS H6.

Rhodohypoxis deflexa (not pictured)
I first saw this at Keith Wiley's extraordinary Wildside garden in Devon, where I was captivated by its jewel-like qualities. It won't tolerate extreme wet winter weather. 10cm.

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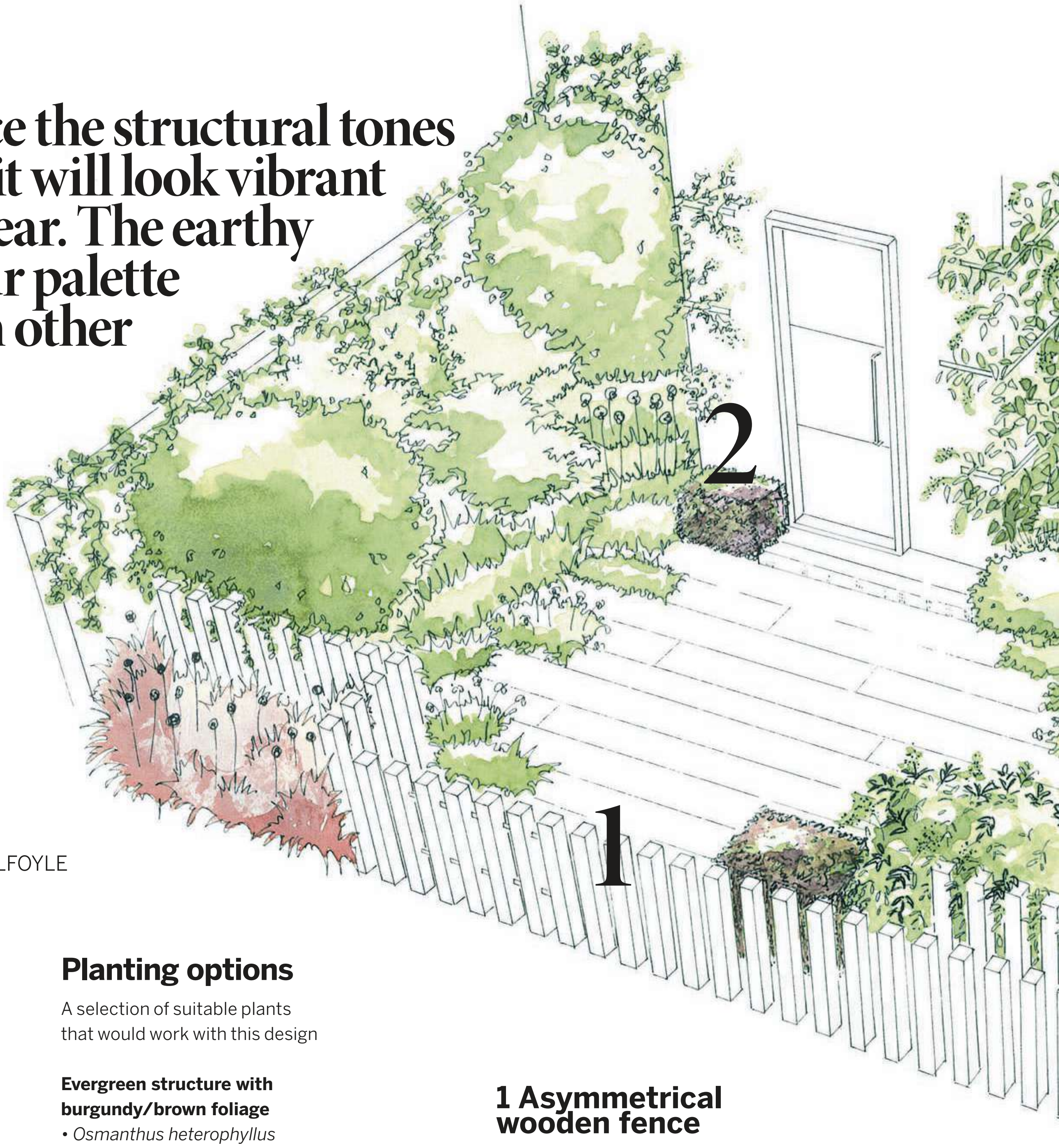
†Hardiness ratings given where available.

JASON INGRAM X2; ALAN GREGG / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; TIM GAINEY / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; CHRIS BURROWS / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO.

> **In this shady space the structural tones are evergreen, so it will look vibrant throughout the year. The earthy tones of the colour palette complement each other**



Town

WORDS AND ILLUSTRATION ANNIE GUILFOYLE

Italian architect Carlo Scarpa's work is a subtle blend of minimalism and exquisite detailing. His collaboration on the *Monument to the Partisan Women* in Venice is one of his most powerful and intriguing pieces of work. Low tide reveals a woman's body clambering to safety over a series of stone blocks. The asymmetry of Scarpa's composition has inspired the layout of this town garden. Staggered stone paving accentuates the plot's width, and plants are encouraged to reach into the space. Simple, linear fencing echoes the paving pattern and allows glimpses into the garden. In this shady space the structural plants are evergreen, so it will look vibrant throughout the year. The colour palette is limited, using earthy tones that complement each other well. Scent is a major player, with *Daphne bholua* 'Alba', *Sarcococca hookeriana* var. *humilis* and *Osmanthus heterophyllus* 'Purpureus' all providing sweet perfume during winter and well into spring.

Practically any shrub can be used to form a hedge. For this garden I have chosen the best-behaved shrub in the world, *Nandina domestica*. It maintains an elegant shape without taking over the garden. An unusual hedge with textural foliage, it looks stunning – and no trimming required. The bins are screened behind two containers planted with bamboo (*Fargesia murielae*).

Planting options

A selection of suitable plants that would work with this design

Evergreen structure with burgundy/brown foliage

- *Osmanthus heterophyllus* 'Purpureus' (foliage flushed purple when young)
- *Pittosporum tenuifolium* 'Atropurpureum'
- *Pittosporum tenuifolium* 'Tom Thumb'

Sweetly scented

- *Clematis armandi*
- *Daphne bholua* 'Alba'
- *Narcissus* 'Petrel'
- *Phlox paniculata* 'David'
- *Sarcococca hookeriana* var. *humilis*

Good for shade

- *Epimedium* x *cantabrigiense*
- *Pileostegia viburnoides*

Long season of interest

- *Astrantia major* 'Ruby Wedding'
- *Geranium* Rozanne (='Gerwat')
- *Nandina domestica*

Notable climbers

- *Akebia quinata*
- *Clematis* 'Betty Corning'
- *Clematis* 'Frances Rivis'
- *Clematis viticella* 'Flore Pleno'

1 Asymmetrical wooden fence

Individual posts are set into concrete. Cut at different heights, and overlap or stagger some sections to accommodate low planting on the pavement side. The shadows cast add another dimension to the design.

2 Evergreen blocks

Purple or brown evergreen foliage is extremely hard to find. However, *Pittosporum tenuifolium* 'Tom Thumb' looks wonderful when clipped into a cube shape and provides a cunning change from box.

3 Water feature

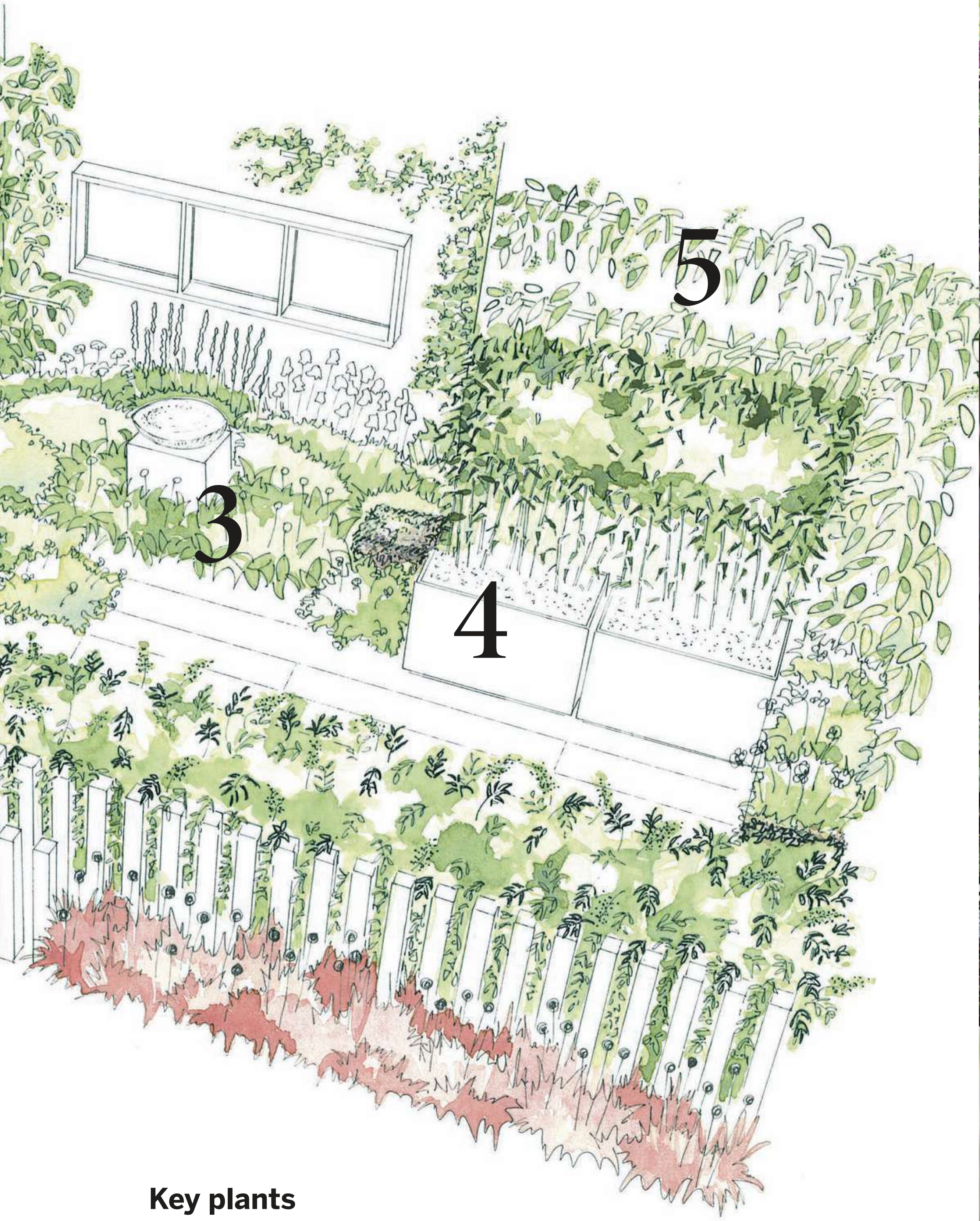
The best way to attract birds into the garden is by providing water, be it a simple bowl or an artist-made vessel. Ensure it is clearly visible from inside the house to enjoy the view.

4 Planters on wheels

Hide the dreaded wheelie bins by using planters on wheels. These are easy to move when the bins have to be put out. Make them from wood or metal, or simply fit wheels to an existing planter.

5 Plant supports

Metal strips set off the wall allow space for air to circulate around the climbers. Paint in dark colours if you want them to disappear or choose a bright colour to make a statement. Varying the lengths will emphasise the asymmetrical design.



Akebia quinata.

Physocarpus opulifolius 'Diabolo'.

Athyrium niponicum var. *pictum.*

Clematis armandi.

Crocus 'Prins Claus'.

Key plants

Akebia quinata
A gorgeous climber that needs plenty of space. Richly coloured, chocolate-scented flowers are often followed by intriguing fruits. Attractive, semi-evergreen foliage. 10m. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b[†].

***Physocarpus opulifolius* 'Diabolo'**
One of my favourite deciduous shrubs with stunning, rich, dark-brown foliage and delicate pink flowers in early summer. 2.5m. AGM[*]. RHS H7, USDA 3a-7b

Athyrium niponicum* var. *pictum
Ferns are under-used. This is one of the prettiest, with painted leaves of silver-green and soft purple. Resist it if you dare. 30cm. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 3a-8b.

Clematis armandi
An evergreen that can be vigorous once established. With superbly textured leaves and vanilla-scented flowers in late winter, it will grow happily on a shady wall. 5m. RHS H4.

***Crocus* 'Prins Claus'**
A beautiful crocus with an alluring colour combination of white petals and a dark-purple streak on the outer side. This regal plant will change your mind about crocuses forever. 8cm. RHS H6.

***Daphne bholua* 'Alba'** (not pictured)
Queen of the daphnes. This is possibly the best shrub you will ever plant in your front garden – a compact evergreen with a winter scent like no other plant. 1.8m.

Fargesia murielae (not pictured)
It is the finely textured leaves that make this clump-forming bamboo so attractive. For those who have a fear of using bamboos, this is a good one to start with. 2.5-3.5m. AGM. RHS H5.

Nandina domestica (not pictured)
This essential evergreen has delicate foliage and in most years sprays of white flowers followed by berries. 2.4m. RHS H5, USDA 6a-9b.

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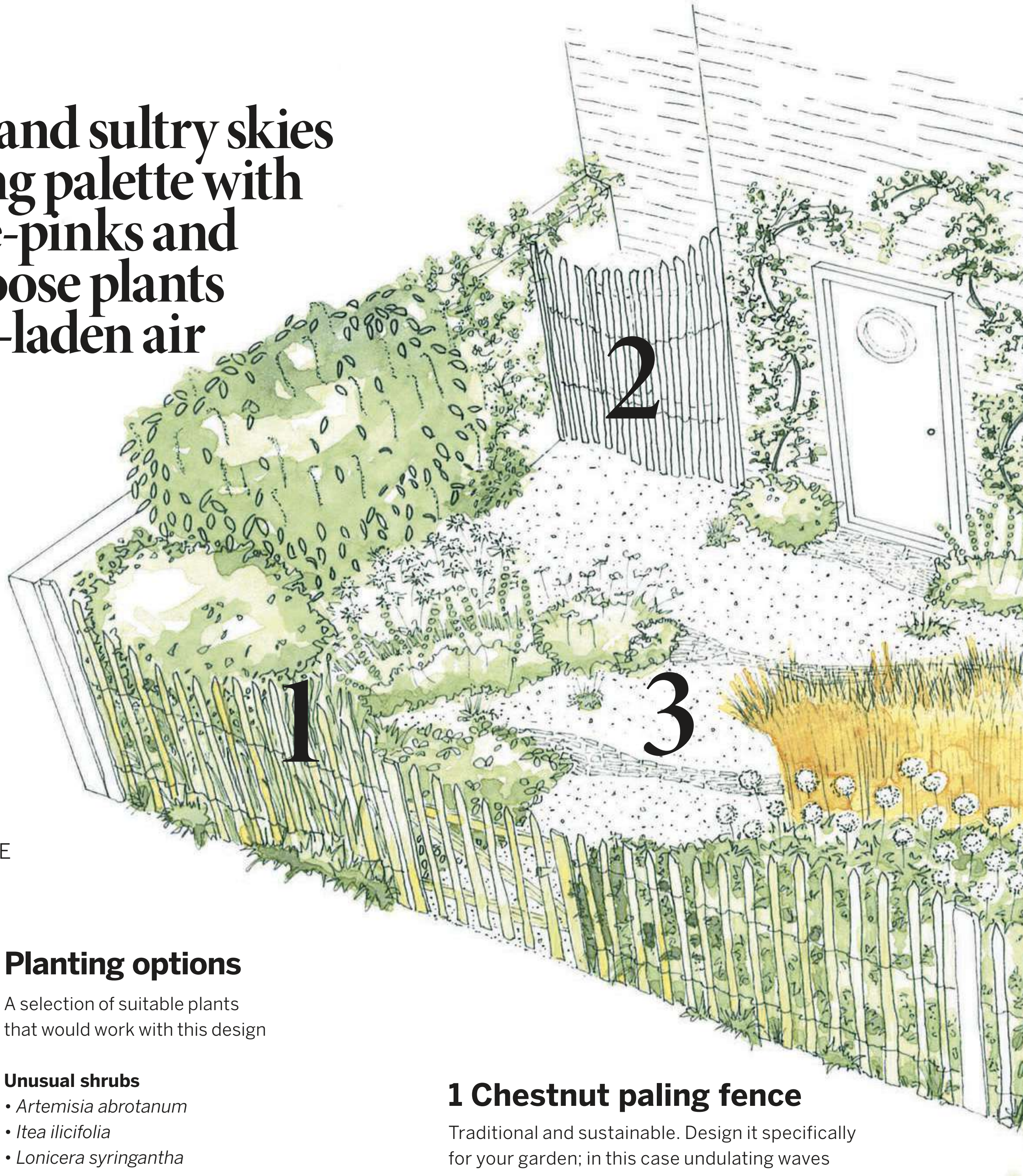
[*] Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
[†] Hardiness ratings given where available.

PURPLEVINE / GETTY IMAGES; ELENA ODAREEVA / GETTY IMAGES; JASON INGRAM X2; SVETLANA KLAISE / GETTY IMAGES.

Shades of seascapes and sultry skies reflect in the planting palette with silvers, blues, purple-pinks and buttery yellows. Choose plants that can tolerate salt-laden air



Coastal

WORDS AND ILLUSTRATION ANNIE GUILFOYLE

Architect Thomas Heatherwick's impressive-looking wave-shaped East Beach Café in the West Sussex town of Littlehampton is the inspiration for this coastal garden. Coastal gardens are generally less prone to severe frosts, but wind and salt-laden air can cause problems. Wind is probably one of the most destructive elements in the garden, rocking plants and destabilising roots. It lessens the plant's ability to obtain nutrients and water. When selecting plants, choose ones that originate from coastal or exposed areas and ensure they are planted firmly to avoid wind-rock.

The fluid shapes of poured concrete combine with stones set on edge, forming a sinuous ground pattern that weaves through the drifts of plants. Swathes of loose gravel allow the vagrants such as *Acaena inermis* 'Purpurea' to self-seed. Undulating waves of *Calamagrostis* x *acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster' intermingle with *Echinops sphaerocephalus* 'Arctic Glow'. These statuesque perennials will sway in the breeze, continuing well into autumn and sometimes even early winter.

Shades of seascapes and sultry skies reflect in the planting palette with silvers, blues, purple-pinks and buttery yellows. These plants will relish the sunny site and free-draining soil but will happily tolerate the salt-laden air. *Armeria maritima* 'In the Red' covers the wood store, forming hummocks of purple foliage dotted with pink flowers.

Planting options

A selection of suitable plants that would work with this design

Unusual shrubs

- *Artemisia abrotanum*
- *Itea ilicifolia*
- *Lonicera syringantha*
- *Myrtus communis* subsp. *tarentina*
- *Olearia* x *mollis* 'Zennorensis'
- *Rhaphiobotrya* 'Coppertone'

Wind-tolerant perennials and grasses

- *Armeria maritima* 'In the Red'
- *Calamagrostis x acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster'
- *Echinops sphaerocephalus* 'Arctic Glow'
- *Eryngium giganteum* 'Silver Ghost'
- *Libertia ixioides* 'Taupo Blaze'

Climbers

- *Holboellia coriacea*
- *Sollya heterophylla*

Groundcover

- *Acaena inermis* 'Purpurea'
- *Pittosporum tobira* 'Nanum'
- *Thymus* 'Porlock'

Bulbs

- *Allium stipitatum* 'Mount Everest'
- *Allium unifolium*
- *Tulbaghia violacea*
- *Tulipa* 'Apricot Beauty'

1 Chestnut paling fence

Traditional and sustainable. Design it specifically for your garden; in this case undulating waves echo the coastal theme.

2 Screening the bins

If you have a recess that is easy to screen off, why not position the bins there? Make the screen out of chestnut paling so it links seamlessly with the front fence.

3 Concrete

Excellent for creating flowing shapes. Inset with stones laid on edge to form ribbons that ebb and flow across the garden. Pebbles or shells can be used for additional colour and texture.

4 Seat

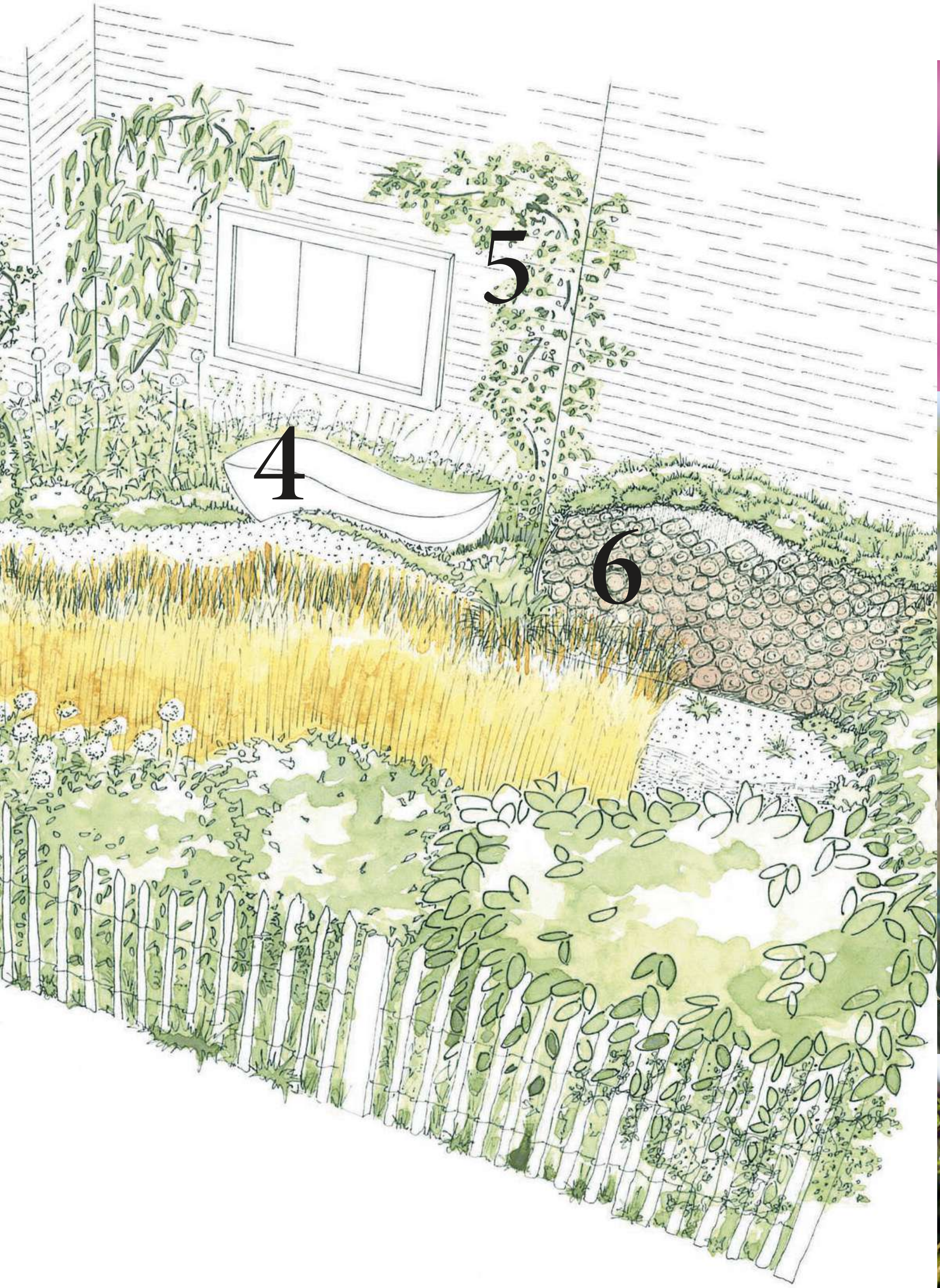
For some reason putting a seat in the front garden is not the done thing, but why not? Make it from found objects such as driftwood and boulders or commission a designer to create something unique.

5 Plant supports

Replace the common or garden trellis. Commission a blacksmith to make something inspiring. It can be made to fit your walls perfectly and suit the plants that you intend to grow.

6 Wood store

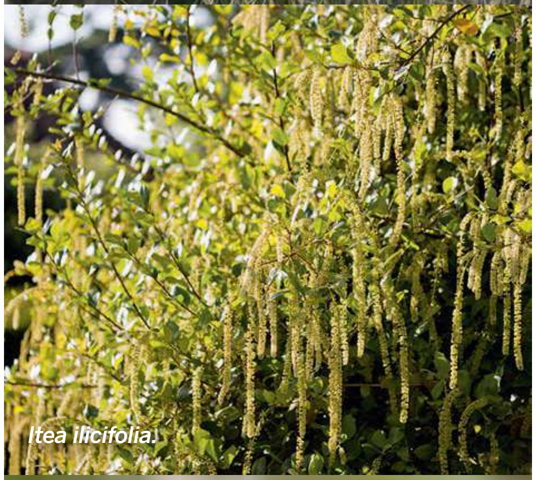
Easy access to the house and a dry location are important. If your garden faces a prevailing wind, you may need a roll-down cover to keep the wood pile dry.



Armeria maritima 'In the Red'.

Echinops sphaerocephalus 'Arctic Glow'.

Calamagrostis x *acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster'.


Itea ilicifolia.

Tulbaghia violacea.

Key plants

***Armeria maritima* 'In the Red'**
Sea thrift is one of our prettiest coastal plants. This one has bronze foliage dotted with pink flowers in spring and early summer. It may look delicate, but it's a toughie. 15cm. RHS H5, USDA 4a-8b[†].

***Echinops sphaerocephalus* 'Arctic Glow'**
A statuesque perennial with all the attributes of blue globe thistles, except these are a stunning silvery-white. Loved by bees and butterflies. 1m. RHS H7, USDA 3a-10b.

***Calamagrostis* x *acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster'**
Upright grass with striking, straw-yellow stems. Holds its shape even in the windiest places and maintains its form into the winter. 1.5m. RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

Itea ilicifolia
A perfect evergreen wall shrub for a sheltered spot. It bears long, honey-scented flower racemes from midsummer, every other year in some gardens. 5m. AGM[*]. RHS H5, USDA 7a-9b.

Tulbaghia violacea
Scented, star-like flowers held on elegant stems make this a desirable addition to the garden. Garlic-smelling leaves can help to repel pests such as aphids and slugs. 60cm. AGM. RHS H3, USDA 7a-10b.

***Agapanthus* 'Gayle's Lilac'** (not pictured)
Everyone likes *Agapanthus* but not everyone grows a lilac one. This beauty is a bit different, which makes it desirable. Half-hardy and heavy flowering. 70cm.

FLOWERPHOTOS / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; JASON INGRAM X2; SHARON PEARSON; JACKY PARKER PHOTOGRAPHY / GETTY IMAGES.

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[*] Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
[†] Hardiness ratings given where available.

BUYER'S GUIDE

Pots and containers

Make the most of your small space with stand-out plant displays in beautiful pots

MATTE BLACK
Patt Plant Pot, black washed,
H11cm x D14cm, £9.99, Hortology,
info@hortology.co.uk, hortology.co.uk

STYLISH DETAIL
Ceramic Artichoke Pot,
H11.5cm x D15cm, £8, Garden Trading,
01993 845559, gardentrading.co.uk

SMALL TERRACOTTA
Auricula Pot,
H10cm x D10cm, £8.95, Whichford Pottery,
01608 684416, whichfordpottery.com

CORTEN CUBED
Square Corten Steel Planter,
H40cm x W40cm x D40cm, £210.38, The Worm
That Turned, 0345 605 2505, worm.co.uk

ANTIQUE LOOK
Abari Round Hanging Planter, aged zinc,
H16cm x D39.5cm, £49.95, Nkuku,
0333 240 0155, nkuku.com

RIBBED ZINC
Galvanised Dolly Bowl, antique zinc,
H34cm x D61cm, £69.99, Crocus,
01344 578111, crocus.co.uk

CUP OF PLENTY
Coppa Planter, terracotta,
H65cm x D75cm, £540, Italian Terrace,
01284 789666, italianterrace.co.uk

ALL IN THE DETAIL
Adam Trough, cast stone,
H35.5cm x W122cm x D34.5cm, £625,
Haddonstone, 01604 770711, haddonstone.com

VINTAGE
Traditional Planter Trough, galvanised steel,
H40cm x W80cm x D40cm, £315, Arthur Jack & Co,
01905 778351, arthurjack.co.uk

COMPILED BY NIKI GOSS, ALYS HURN AND KATIE BEALE

CLASSIC PATTERN
Vintage Patterned Plant Pot, trellis,
H12cm x D14cm, £8.95, The Worm That Turned,
0345 605 2505, worm.co.uk

CRETAN POT
Flat Koronyos Planter, terracotta,
H12cm x W18cm, £18, Pots and Pithoi,
01342 714793, potsandpithoi.com

SQUARE ROOTS
Cast Stone Small Rib Planter, Bath stone,
H11cm x W10cm, £10, Haddonstone,
01604 770711, haddonstone.com

LOW AND WIDE
Ciotola Low Bowl Planter,
H26cm x D60cm, £275, Italian Terrace,
01284 789666, italianterrace.co.uk

MODERN MATERIALS
Soma Planter, glass-reinforced concrete and Iroko,
H38cm x D23cm, from £3,274, The Modern Garden
Company, 01279 653200, moderngarden.co.uk

HAND-CRAFTED
Morag Riveted Box, bronze finish on copper,
H42cm x W50cm x D50cm, from £1,188, Bronzino,
020 7370 4344, bronzino.co.uk

COUNTRY LIVING
Versailles Box Planter, Iroko painted white,
H49cm x W46cm x D46cm, from £850,
Andrew Crace, 01279 842685, andrewcrace.com

MOVABLE FEAST
Elho Pure Soft Brick Long Wheels, anthracite,
H39cm x W79cm x D39cm, £199.99, Crocus,
01344 578000, crocus.co.uk

ELEGANCE
Long Tom Planter, terracotta
H120cm x D65cm, £495, Pots and Pithoi,
01342 714793, potsandpithoi.com

The kitchen courtyard at Great Dixter is just a few metres square and sits directly outside the kitchen door. Aaron has turned it into a thriving kitchen garden in its own right.

Eating seasonally and making the best use of ingredients comes more naturally when they are growing outside your door

This is an extract from *Grow Fruit and Vegetables in Pots: Planting Advice and Recipes from Great Dixter* by Aaron Bertelsen with photography by Andrew Montgomery, which is published by Phaidon, priced £24.95.

Know no bounds

Great Dixter gardener cook, Aaron Bertelsen, shares his knowledge of growing edibles in pots in a courtyard kitchen garden

WORDS AARON BERTELSEN PHOTOGRAPHS ANDREW MONTGOMERY

Much has been said and written of late about the importance of understanding where our food comes from, of shifting the focus of our meals to include more vegetables, and reducing food waste. I believe that growing your own – or at least some of your own – is one of the most effective ways of changing your attitude to what, and how, you cook and eat. Eating seasonally, and making the best use of your ingredients, seems to come more naturally when they are growing right outside your door. I am a great believer, too, in the psychological benefits of gardening.

Far from being limiting, container gardening offers endless possibilities. A sheltered courtyard creates a microclimate, where it is possible to grow crops, such as apricots and peaches, that might struggle in a more open site. Sun-worshippers, such as tomatoes, chillies and aubergines, will thrive on a bright balcony, while shadier spots are ideal for salad crops, potatoes, leafy greens, such as Swiss chard, and fruits, such as blueberries, rhubarb and even currants. Meanwhile, woody Mediterranean herbs, such as rosemary and thyme, can cope with the most inhospitable conditions.

One of the great advantages of container growing is that it is easy to extend the growing season. Many plants will benefit from the additional warmth found close to the house or apartment, and it is the work of a few seconds to throw a piece of fleece or hessian over more vulnerable pots.

Another bonus of container gardening is that there is no back-breaking digging, and you are free to create different compost mixes to suit the needs of individual crops – light soil for carrots and parsnips, acidic for blueberries and so on. A container garden also provides opportunities to grow unusual varieties or hard-to-obtain ingredients, such as that obscure herb you need for your favourite curry but can never seem to find in the shops. □

Turn the page for Aaron's recommendations on which edible crops to grow in pots ▷

Which crops can be grown in pots?

The short answer to this question is, anything you like. From delicate, leafy herbs to root vegetables and sturdy fruit trees, there should be no reason why – given a little thought, forward planning and, of course, some tender loving care – you can't create a varied, productive container garden, whatever the space and the conditions you are working in.

If I could grow only one type of thing in my container garden, it would be salad leaves. This also happens to be what I would recommend new gardeners to start with. Salad leaves are easy to grow, make good use of space and generally taste much better than what you can buy in the shops. A couple of 30cm pots of cut-and-come again leaves will give you flavoursome fresh salads for weeks, if not months. I'm convinced home-grown salad leaves are more nutritious, and they also look beautiful. Choose carefully and you will have a pot full of textures and colours to bring you pleasure throughout the year.

Other stars of the kitchen container garden include stalwarts, such as chard and kale, which will keep you in fresh greens all year round; structural plants, such as globe artichokes, that will anchor your display; and true show stoppers, such as peas and the gloriously varied sea kale. You will find that many of them offer tremendous value too. Some, such as chard, will just keep on growing, while others offer several crops for the price of one: think of peas, with their shoots, flowers and juvenile pods, or the delectable tops of broad beans.

Root vegetables may not seem like the most obvious candidates for a container garden, but they can do very well in a confined space, and, of course, you can control the growing conditions in a pot far more easily than in a garden. They are also surprisingly generous crops to grow: a pot of beetroot will give you handfuls of delicious leaves as well as the roots themselves. Root vegetables are well worth growing for aesthetic reasons too: the bright green, frothy foliage of a carrot is a great foil for the dramatic, deep red of beetroot leaves, while parsnips are so good looking that we actually grow them as flowers in the ornamental garden at Great Dixter.

Think about growing fruit trees, and the first thing that comes to mind is that you will probably need an orchard, or at the very least a generous kitchen garden. Think again. These days there are so many dwarf forms of fruit trees especially bred to thrive in pots – and produce full-size fruit – that there really is no reason not to grow your own. Indeed, having limited space can actually work to your advantage – walls, provided they get plenty of sun, will reflect heat and speed up ripening, particularly of more exotic crops, such as figs, apricots and peaches. But even if a tree feels too ambitious, you can still share the joy. A blueberry bush in a pot will yield handfuls of sun-warmed berries, while delicate, violet-flavoured Alpine strawberries don't even need a pot of their own – they will happily grow in the spaces around other crops, or even in the cracks between paving slabs.

Herbs are generally very well suited to growing in pots. They take up relatively little space – although do avoid using containers that are too small – and give so much in return. A few fresh herbs will transform your cooking.

To my mind, edible flowers are the icing on the cake of the container garden; even just a few flowers will make it sing with their colour and scent. And they will attract pollinators too, helping to make the rest of your garden more productive.

Even a small balcony can offer enough space for a good selection of herbs and vegetables.

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12 EDIBLES TO GROW IN POTS

1 Chillies Incredibly easy to grow. This is a Mediterranean crop and used to tough conditions. Just give the plants some sun, and possibly a small stake for extra support if they are in a windy spot. Use a good soil-based compost, and you won't need to feed them.

2 Lemons These are hungry plants, so make sure you use a good, soil-based compost, adding some grit or sharp sand to improve drainage. Needs protection from frost.

3 Dill I grow dill both for its leaves and its seeds. Does best from direct sowing, as it does not like its roots disturbed. It will thrive in a pot, provided you water every couple of days and don't let it dry out. For a good crop of decent-size seeds, I like 'Mammoth'.

4 Kale Choose a generous pot, as this annual is a sturdy, long-lived vegetable, but not the thirstiest of crops; a good soaking twice a week will be enough. My top three cultivars for flavour and colour would have to be 'Redbor', 'White Russian' and 'Red Russian'.

5 Peach Fan-training against a wall is the better way to go because of the additional heat reflected back to help ripen the fruit. All you will need is a warm wall, plenty of sun and a large pot, around 45-50cm in diameter. Water once a week, or every three to four days in hot weather, soaking the pot thoroughly. 'Garden Lady' is a slow-growing cultivar ideal for pots.

6 Butternut squash Choose cultivars suited to growing well in pots – I've grown both 'Barbara' and 'Butterbush'. Sow this annual crop early in pots on a warm windowsill with the aim of having good-sized plants ready to go out as soon as the frosts are over. Your squash in a pot will need regular watering, as well as feeding, and will benefit from a good rich soil.

7 Bay A great choice for adding structure to your container garden all year round. Very easy to look after, provided you give it a good sunny spot and feed it regularly. Prune every spring, both to keep it at the size you want it and to reduce any congestion.

8 Tarragon A perennial, but it will need some protection through the winter. There is only one species to grow, *Artemisia dracunculus* or French tarragon. Avoid Russian tarragon (*Artemisia dracunculoides*). It may grow faster, but it is tough and lacking in flavour. French tarragon does not set viable seed, so if you are starting from scratch, buy a plant and pot it up in early spring.

9 Fig Easy to train as a fan against the wall, and does not demand much. I fork in a bit of blood, fish and bone meal in spring and try to give the pot a good soaking once a week.

10 Oregano Buy plants rather than trying to grow from seed, and add some sand or grit when potting up. Give the plants as much sun as possible to maximise the flavour.

11 Apricot Make sure your tree is grafted on to dwarfing rootstock and that it is self-pollinating. Plant it straight into its 'forever' pot, which should be 45-50cm in diameter. Give the plant a good soak once a week, or every three or four days if the weather is hot.

12 Broad beans You will need a big pot to grow this annual crop. My current favourite cultivar is 'Crimson Flowered', which has the most beautiful wine-red, scented flowers. It is also particularly well-suited to container growing because it's a compact plant.

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Recommended designers for small gardens

All good garden designers will be able to help with planning your space, whatever its size. Be sure to discuss budget, materials, how you want to use the space, and how much time you want to spend actually gardening. As well as those designers whose gardens we've featured in the previous pages, here are some other designers whose work offers style, attention to detail and planting expertise

JAMES ALDRIDGE

Pared-back, contemporary design, combined with a considered planting palette.

5 Choumert Mews,
Choumert Road, Peckham,
London SE15 4BD.
Tel 020 7252 8232,
jamesaldridgedesign.com
@jamesaldridgelandscape

ARTISAN LANDSCAPES

Bristol-based company with a good balance between crisp hard landscaping and well thought-through planting. 2021 Association of Professional Landscapers award winners.

69 Princess Victoria Street,
Clifton, Bristol BS8 4DD.
Tel 0117 973 8519,
artisanlandscapes.co.uk
@artisanlandscapes

MARCUS BARNETT STUDIO

A design studio of ten to 12 landscape architects and designers headed by Chelsea-award-winner Marcus Barnett. Strong architectural outlines are soften by naturalistic planting in projects ranging from small courtyards to extensive landscapes.

10-11 Glenthorne Mews,
London W6 0LJ.
Tel 020 7736 9761,
marcusbarnett.com
@marcusbarnettstudio

BESTIQUE

Cutting-edge designs with a timeless quality of style enhanced by bold planting perfectly in tune with its location. Led by award-winning designer Anoushka Feiler.

Melbourne House, 46 Aldwych,
London WC2B 4LL.
Tel 0330 1138113,
bestique.co.uk
@anoushkafeiler_bestique

BOWLES & WYER

Accomplished design and build from landscape architecture practice established in 1993. The team aims to enhance your outside space so that it will also enhance your lifestyle and appreciation of being outdoors.

5 Williams Court, Tunnel Way,
Pitstone, Leighton Buzzard,
Bedfordshire LU7 9GJ.
Tel 01296 662439,
bowleswyer.co.uk
@bowleswyer

Jane Brockbank makes a feature of the boundary fence in this small garden.

RICHARD BLOOM

JANE BROCKBANK GARDENS

Jane brings a painterly sense of colour and texture to her planting, combined with a keen understanding of how plants interrelate with nature and a contemporary approach to design.

Studio 9, Parson's Green
House, 27 Parson's Green Lane,
London SW6 4HH.
Tel 020 7371 9475,
janebrockbank.com
@janebrockbank

CAMERON GARDENS

Experienced team of designers founded by Alasdair Cameron in 1992. Gardens are created as immersive spaces where the natural world is key.

Unit 1-2, 69 St Marks Road,
London W10 6JG.
Tel 020 8969 3399,
camerongardens.co.uk
@camerongardens

DEL BUONO GAZERWITZ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Award-winning landscape architect design duo whose approach favours clean lines, beautiful materials and unfussy detailing with soft planting.

3rd Floor, 42 Theobalds Road,
London WC1X 8NW.
Tel 020 7405 7405,
delbuono-gazerwitz.co.uk
@tommasodb

JACK DUNKLEY DESIGNS

A young designer with an impressive selection of RHS awards already under his belt. Jack's designs display an architectural approach.

7 Bell Yard, London WC2A 2JR.
Tel 020 4513 6368,
jackdunkley.com
@jack_dunkley

ELKS-SMITH LANDSCAPE & GARDEN DESIGN

Award-winning design practice. Helen Elks-Smith's creative designs, some of which have featured in BBC Two's *Your Garden Made Perfect*, are timeless.

Castle Malwood,
Minstead, Southampton,
Hampshire SO43 7PE.
Tel 023 8178 2660,
elks-smith.co.uk
@elkssmith

EMILY ERLAM STUDIO

Emily's gardens have a real sense of place. Key are appropriate plant choices alongside individual touches. Emily also offers a stylish selection of garden accessories and furniture via her website.

8 Wharton Street,
London WC1X 9PX.
Tel 07973 419097,
erlamstudio.com
@emilyerlam

ADOLFO HARRISON

Award-winner Adolfo started a career in art before segueing into garden design. His mainly urban designs and have a beautifully curated quality to them.

East London Studio: Shed,
Studio 2, 8 Lee Street,
London E8 4DY.
West London Studio:
48 Dynham Road,
London NW6 2NR.
Tel 07973 692373,
adolfoharrison.com
@adolfo_gardens

COLM JOSEPH GARDENS

Colm's garden for charity Perennial at Chelsea Flower Show 2019 won much acclaim and perfectly encapsulated his passion for plants combined with a strong eye for spatial composition.

3 Westley Lodge, Six Mile
Bottom, Newmarket,
Cambridgeshire CB8 0UA.
Tel 07837 909563,
colmjoseph.co.uk
@colm_joseph

LONDON GARDEN DESIGNER

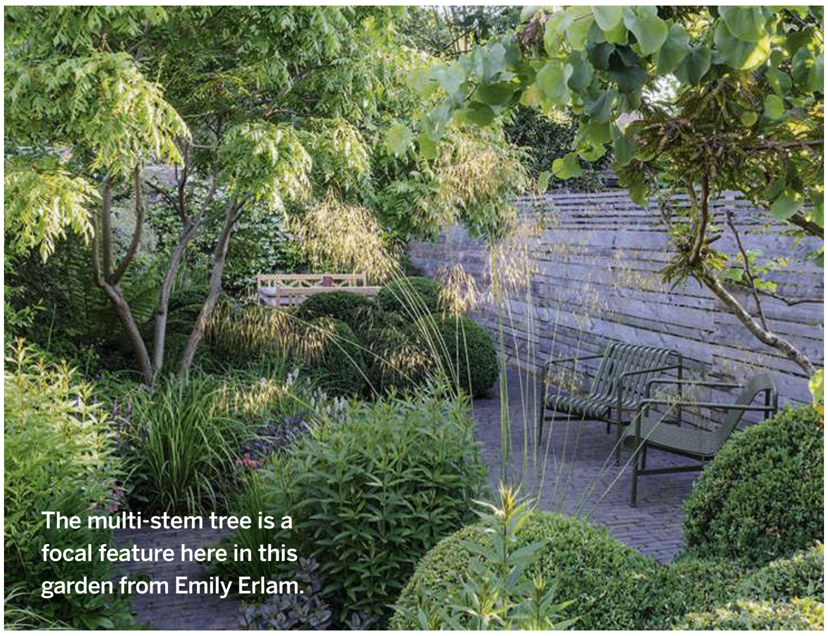
Designer Sara Jane Rothwell established her studio in 2003, drawing on her previous experience as a film set designer. Her elegant city gardens and roof terraces have seen her win various awards.

16 Highgate West Hill,
London N6 6NP.
Tel 020 8348 9514,
londongardendesigner.com
@londongardendesign

STEFANO MARINAZ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Hailing from Italy from a family of nursery owners, Stefano came to the UK to study landscape architecture before going on to work for renowned garden designer Arne Maynard. He established his own studio in 2021 and works on both secluded urban spaces and more rural gardens that look to their surrounding landscapes.

9 Fishers Lane,
London W4 1RX.
Tel 020 3727 7264,
stefanomarinaz.com
@stefano.marinaz.landscapes.uk


The multi-stem tree is a focal feature here in this garden from Emily Erlam.

JASON INGRAM

TOM MASSEY STUDIO

Multi award-winning designer, who is designing RHS Chelsea Flower Show's first organic garden for sponsor Yeo Valley at 2021's event. His approach is to produce sustainable, ecological and beautiful gardens with a little extra edge to their design.

Tom Massey Studio,
Mortlake, London SW14.
Tel 07862 457630,
tommassey.co.uk
@tommasseyuk

MATT NICHOL GARDEN DESIGN

Following plenty of experience building Chelsea show gardens and as planting consultant, Matt set up his own design and build studio some 15 years ago.

The Studio, 53 Yew Tree Lane,
Poynton, Stockport,
Cheshire SK12 1PT
Tel 01625 403847,
mngardendesign.co.uk
@mattnicholgardendesign

THE PLANT SPECIALIST

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theplantspecialist.co.uk

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Tel 07941 794763.
propagatingdan.com
@propagatingdan

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With studios in London and their homeland of Wales, brothers Harry and David design gardens with a strong sense of place, collaborating with craftsmen and architects to achieve harmonious and thoughtful designs in both rural and urban locations.

richlandscapes.net
@therichbrothers

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rosebanklandscaping.co.uk
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Strong bones and a good relationship between interior and exterior ensures that the gardens from Charlotte and her team have a classic appeal.

118 Blythe Road,
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charlotterowe.com
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Crisp and confident design from a young designer who has already achieved both RHS and industry awards. His fresh-looking designs work well to complement contemporary architecture.

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tomsimpsondesign.com
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Originally working in the interior design industry, Butter moved her love of the creative process outside to bring gardens to life with her sensitive approach to texture, colour, design, scale and pattern.

2 Ashchurch Park Villas,
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butterwakefield.co.uk
@butterwakefield

Useful resources

The following trade associations for the landscape industry are a good way to find accredited designers and have listings of those working in your local area. They are also a good way to keep an eye on recent award winners.

- **Society of Garden Designers – sgd.org.uk**
- **British Association of Landscape Industries – bali.org.uk**
- **Association of Professional Landscapers – landscaper.org.uk**

Layered planting by Helen Elks-Smith.

JASON INGRAM

Books

Essential books for small gardens

GREEN
Simple Ideas for Small Outdoor Spaces
Ula Maria
Urban Garden Design
Transform your outdoor space into a beautiful and practical escape
Kate Gould
photography by Helen Fickling
RHS
DESIGN OUTDOORS
Projects and plans for a stylish garden
Matt Keightley
Photography by Marianne Majerus
RHS
HOW TO CREATE YOUR GARDEN
IDEAS & ADVICE FOR TRANSFORMING YOUR OUTDOOR SPACE
ADAM FROST

GREEN: SIMPLE IDEAS FOR SMALL OUTDOOR SPACES by Ula Maria, Mitchell Beazley, £20, ISBN 978-1784726010

Throughout *Green*, author Ula Maria proposes the positives of smaller gardens over sprawling spaces: they're easier to manage, more economical to maintain and achievable by all. Even a view from a window can count. She encourages us to think of windows as picture frames, filling the view with blooming flowers or luscious foliage for a green fix even from indoors. Flicking through this delightful book, it feels almost as enjoyable and relaxing as sitting in the garden, and no matter how small that garden is, Maria will help you see its bright side and discover its inspiring potential.

URBAN GARDEN DESIGN by Kate Gould, Kyle Books, £20, ISBN 978-0857834874

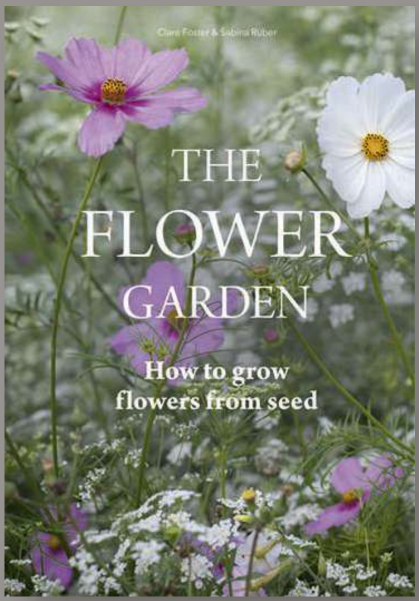
With its focus on urban plots, this book covers three main garden types: basement spaces, small urban gardens and courtyards, and roof terraces and balconies. Award-winning designer Kate Gould leads the reader through the design process of all three garden types. There are plenty of glossy photographs of beautiful urban gardens to inspire the reader, as well as a couple of pages of informative plant profiles for each garden type. Don't worry if you don't have huge amounts of money to spend, as this book will inspire you whatever your means, with lots of practical suggestions for every budget.

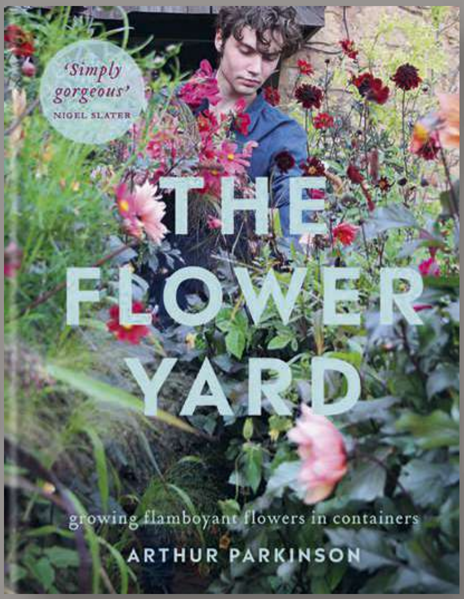
RHS DESIGN OUTDOORS by Matt Keightley, Mitchell Beazley, £25, ISBN 978-1784724801

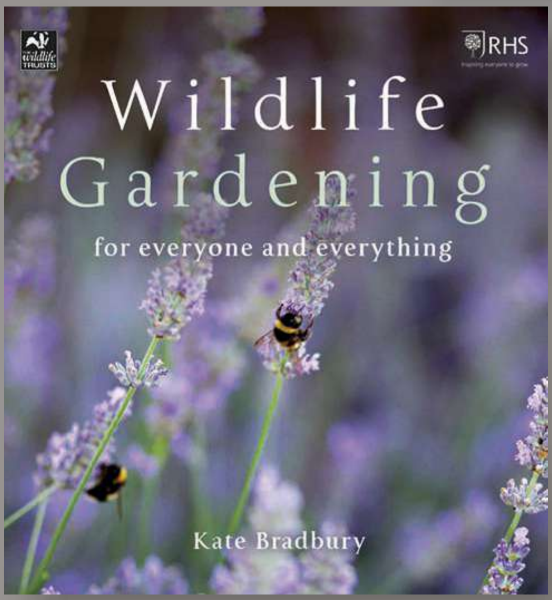
Packed with inspiration, this book features 35 gardens, some designed by Keightley, the rest by a collection of more than 20 other designers. The gardens are predominantly contemporary, cool and urban with a few exceptions. The final chapter covers challenging sites, such as basements, roof terraces and tiny courtyards. Each case study includes a 'design checklist' describing specific features, along with a focus on 'garden details', either a planting combination or a particular material. This book will be helpful to anyone wanting inspirational ideas for a contemporary garden.

HOW TO CREATE YOUR GARDEN by Adam Frost, DK, £20, ISBN 978-0241332313

Adam Frost shares years of expertise in this accessible guide for the enthusiastic novice, divided into sections entitled Design, Build and Enjoy. The section on design is truly excellent. Here you will find practical pointers, and lots of glossy images of gardens designed by Frost. But at its heart is a series of border designs annotated with fascinating insights into the designer's thought processes. Most amateur gardeners can produce a layout that works well enough. But with the help of this book, we have a slightly better chance of producing something special for ourselves.


Clare Foster & Sabina Rüber
THE FLOWER GARDEN
How to grow flowers from seed


'Simply gorgeous' NIGEL SLATER
THE FLOWER YARD
growing flamboyant flowers in containers
ARTHUR PARKINSON


RHS
Wildlife Gardening
for everyone and everything
Kate Bradbury

Perfect Lawns
Perfect Pots
Perfect Pruning
A Practical Guide
SIMON AKEROYD

THE FLOWER GARDEN: HOW TO GROW FLOWERS FROM SEED by Clare Foster, Laurence King Publishing, £19.99, ISBN 978-1786274090

Clare Foster is garden editor at *House & Garden*, and in 2012 she set herself, together with friend and photographer Sabina Rüber, the challenge to grow as many annual flowers from seed as they could. The book is a distillation of their findings and successes, listing 57 gorgeous plants to grow cheaply and easily from seed. For experienced growers this is the most stylish of style guides. For a novice gardener it anticipates and encourages the delight to be found in sowing a tiny seed and nurturing it to fully grown, blooming glory.

THE FLOWER YARD by Arthur Parkinson, Octopus, £22, ISBN 978-0857839176

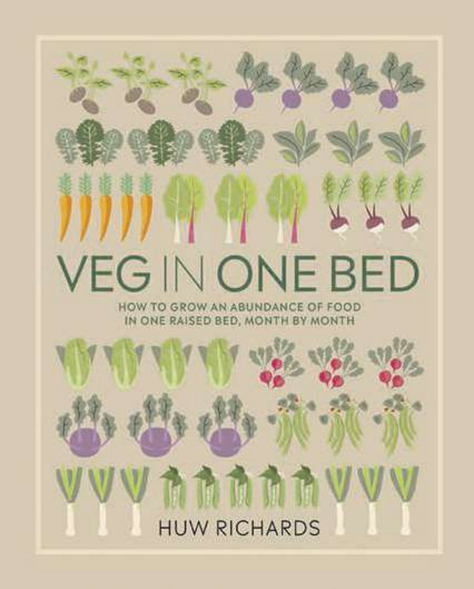
Arthur Parkinson's *The Flower Yard* is a record, in his own words and photographs, of the flower garden he has created in the tiny plot in front of his mother's house in Nottingham. Here, he has devoted his extravagant creativity to an entirely paved space barely large enough to call a garden. The author's personality, a strong sense of place and a passion for the environment shine throughout the pages of this lovely book. All in all, this makes for an encouraging read, providing inspiration to those who feel that a lack of space and facilities inhibits their horticultural aspirations.

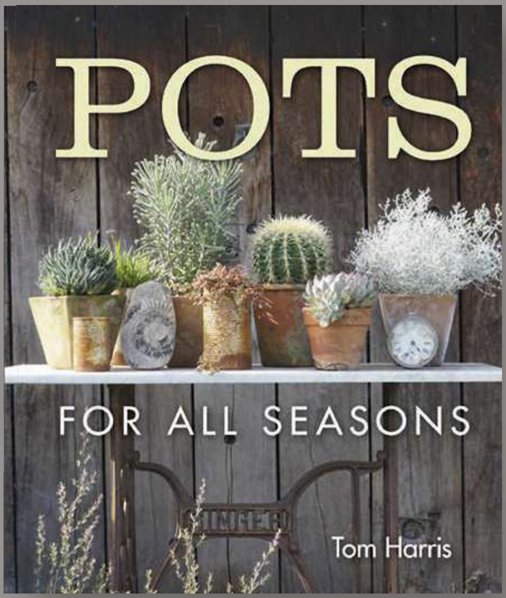
WILDLIFE GARDENING FOR EVERYONE AND EVERYTHING by Kate Bradbury, Bloomsbury, £14.99, ISBN 978-1472956057

From bee hotels to compost corners, this inspiring book provides advice on how to make your garden, balcony, doorstep or patio a haven for wildlife. It is filled with useful, clear charts tailored specifically to the needs of every size and shape of garden. Teaming up with the RHS and Wildlife Trusts, author Kate Bradbury walks you through a range of practical projects aimed to get you started on encouraging local wildlife into your garden. If you have a small garden and are seeking inspiration on how to make it more wildlife-friendly, this is the book for you.

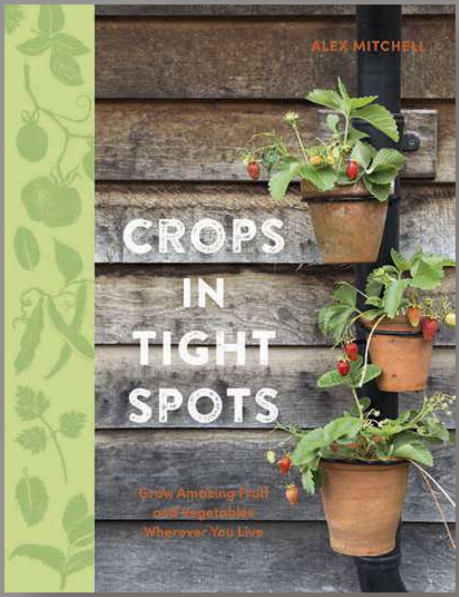
NATIONAL TRUST PERFECT PRACTICAL GARDENING GUIDES: POTS, LAWNS, PRUNING by Simon Akeroyd, National Trust, £6.99 each.
ISBN 978-1911358718 (Pruning)
ISBN 978-1911358725 (Lawns)
ISBN 978-1911358701 (Pots)

Written by Simon Akeroyd, an experienced head gardener at the National Trust, these guides are aimed at budding gardeners who are ready to tackle some practical gardening tasks, from sowing lawns to designing spring pots. The chapters are jam-packed with useful tips and advice, and cover every aspect of the topic at hand. The books are well written with a great depth of knowledge, and the author's friendly tone inspires feelings of trust.


VEG IN ONE BED
HOW TO GROW AN ABUNDANCE OF FOOD IN ONE RAISED BED, MONTH BY MONTH
HUW RICHARDS


POTS
FOR ALL SEASONS
Tom Harris

MODERN CONTAINER GARDENING
How to Create a Stylish Small-space Garden Anywhere
Isabelle Palmer


ALEX MITCHELL
CROPS IN TIGHT SPOTS
Grow Amazing Fruit and Vegetables Wherever You Live

VEG IN ONE BED
by Huw Richards, DK, £16.99, ISBN 978-0241376522

This practical, month-by-month guide to growing vegetables will most certainly appeal to beginner kitchen gardeners or anyone with limited space. For beginner growers, knowing where to start can be daunting. This is not a book that requires green fingers – gardener Huw Richards knows his onions and provides a foolproof plan of how to produce 19 different vegetable crops from a 3m x 1.2m bed in one season. The book is split into monthly sections providing practical advice on filling your bed, illustrated with simple diagrams and photography of Richards in action.

POTS FOR ALL SEASONS
by Tom Harris, Pimpernel Press, £20, ISBN 978-1910258798

In this colourful book, an extensive photographic gallery showcases seasonal arrangements encompassing bulbs, foliage, berries, edibles and seedheads, as well as flowers. Chapters include advice on choosing the right container and aggregate; organic pest control and cultivation requirements; and understanding the needs of your plants to keep them looking good all year. Plants in containers need a high level of aftercare if they are to thrive and Harris's key to success lies in unhurried preparation, quality components and diligent aftercare.

MODERN CONTAINER GARDENING: HOW TO CREATE A STYLISH SMALL-SPACE GARDEN ANYWHERE
by Isabelle Palmer, Hardie Grant Books, £16, ISBN 978-1784883133

You can have a garden in a small space – even a wild meadow garden if you choose – and Palmer shows us how to do it in this accessible guide to creating container gardens. It's aimed predominantly at novice gardeners, but seasoned pros may find it useful for inspiration. The bulk of the 175-page book is given to Palmer's 28 container projects, from the simple, to the more extravagant. This book should encourage more gardening in petite urban pockets.

CROPS IN TIGHT SPOTS
by Alex Mitchell, Kyle Books, £18.99, ISBN 978-0857835925

Alex Mitchell, garden columnist for the London *Evening Standard*, seeks out awkward, urban locations and reveals how they can be transformed into productive, edible spaces. From ledges and sills to roofs, alleys and balconies, this book is full of enterprising, imaginative and sustainable ideas for growing your own. The book is crammed with concise, practical tips and advice, including handy lists of tools and plants, and ideas for attractive upcycling. There are plenty of quick and easy projects to keep you busy. The pages are also colour-coded, making the book easy to dip into and very user-friendly.

BOOKS REVIEWED BY (IN REVIEW ORDER) KATIE DUTTON, JANE PERRONE, ANNIE GUILFOYLE, JODIE JONES, SORREL EVERTON, RORY DUSOIR, KATIE BEALE, JOSHUA SPARKES, ANNA GREENLAND, JACKY MILLS, ROSANNA MORRIS AND MATTHEW BIGGS.

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What to plant out
What to harvest

STIRRING THE ROOTS

April can be a changeable month – warm and sunny one minute, with frosts the next – but it's time to get busy with your seed sowing and make the most of your harvested rhubarb

Jobs for April

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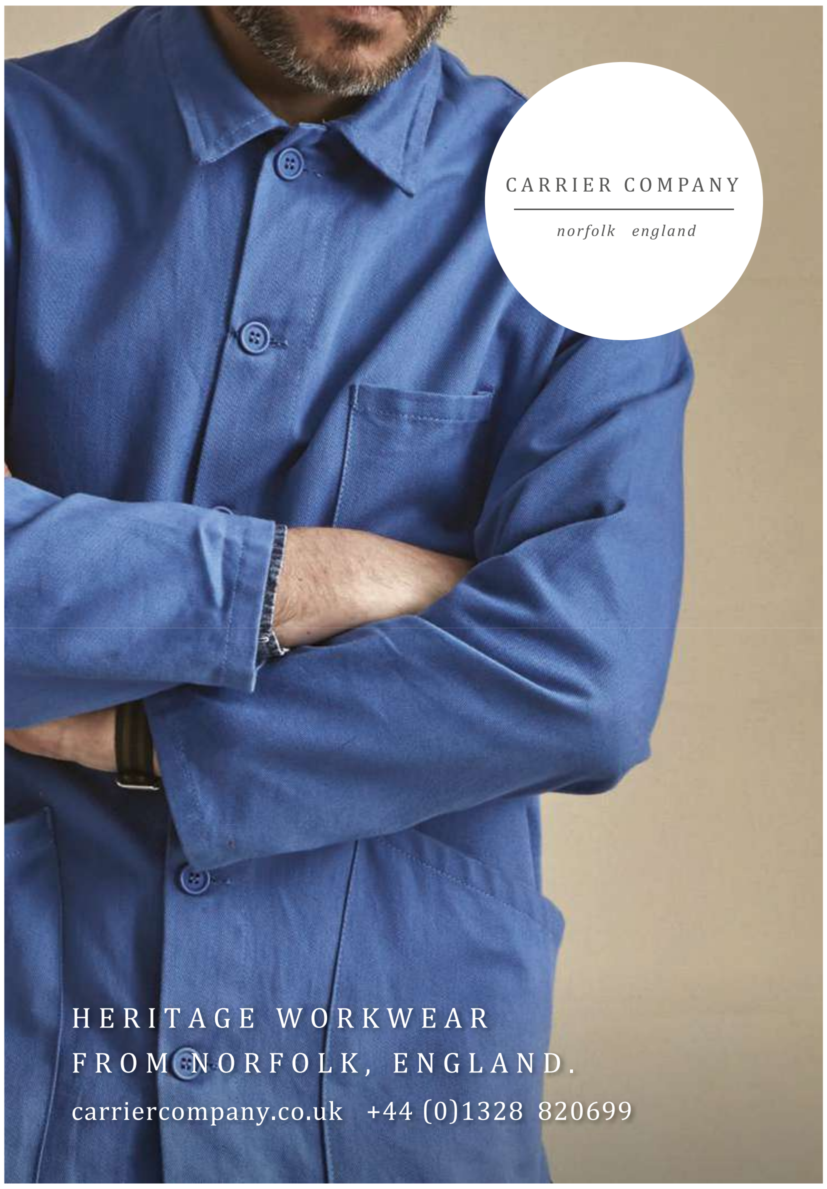
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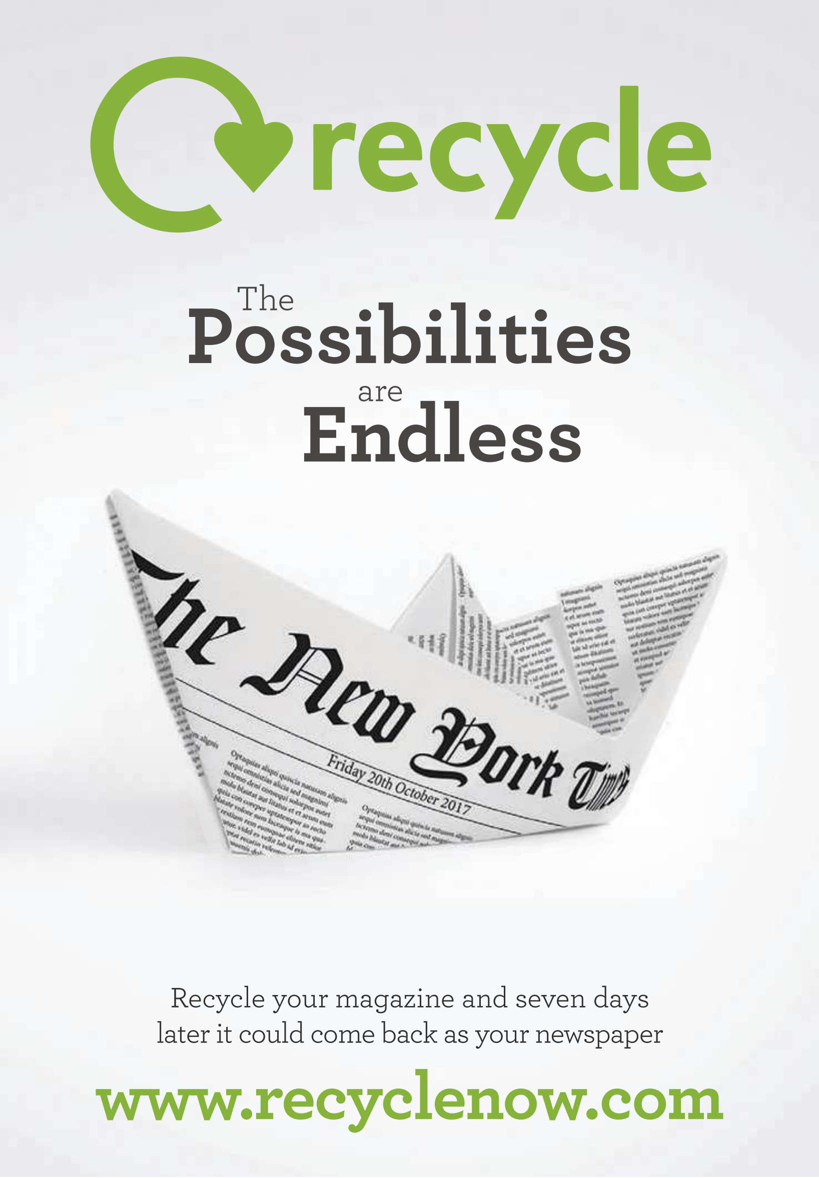
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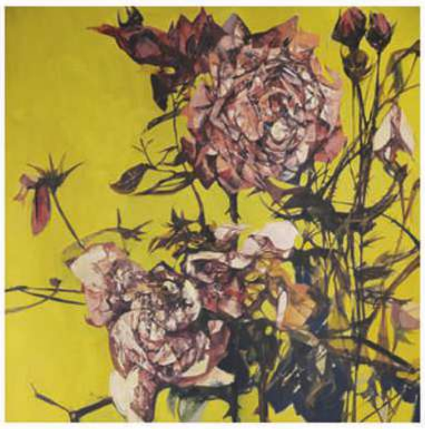

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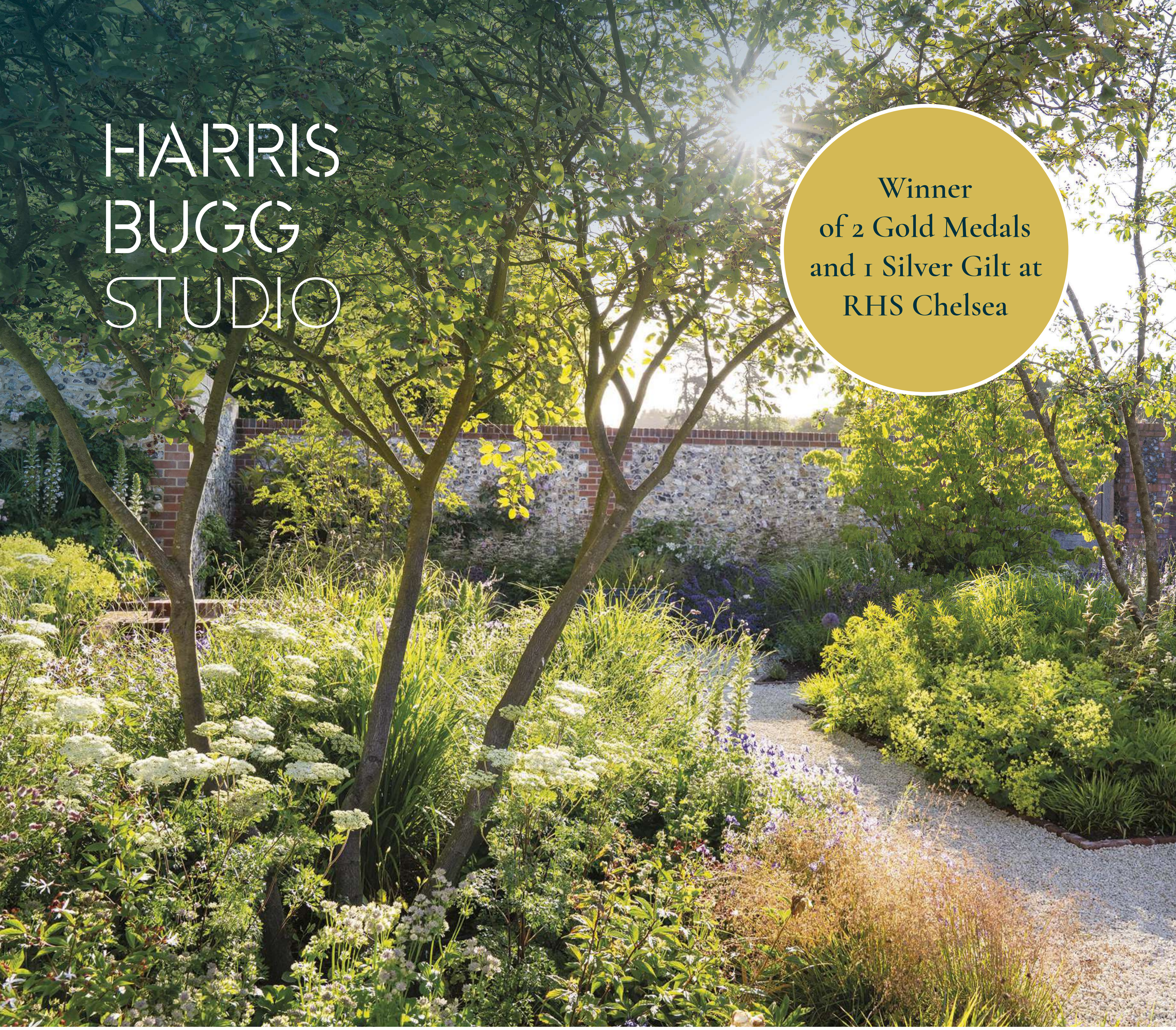
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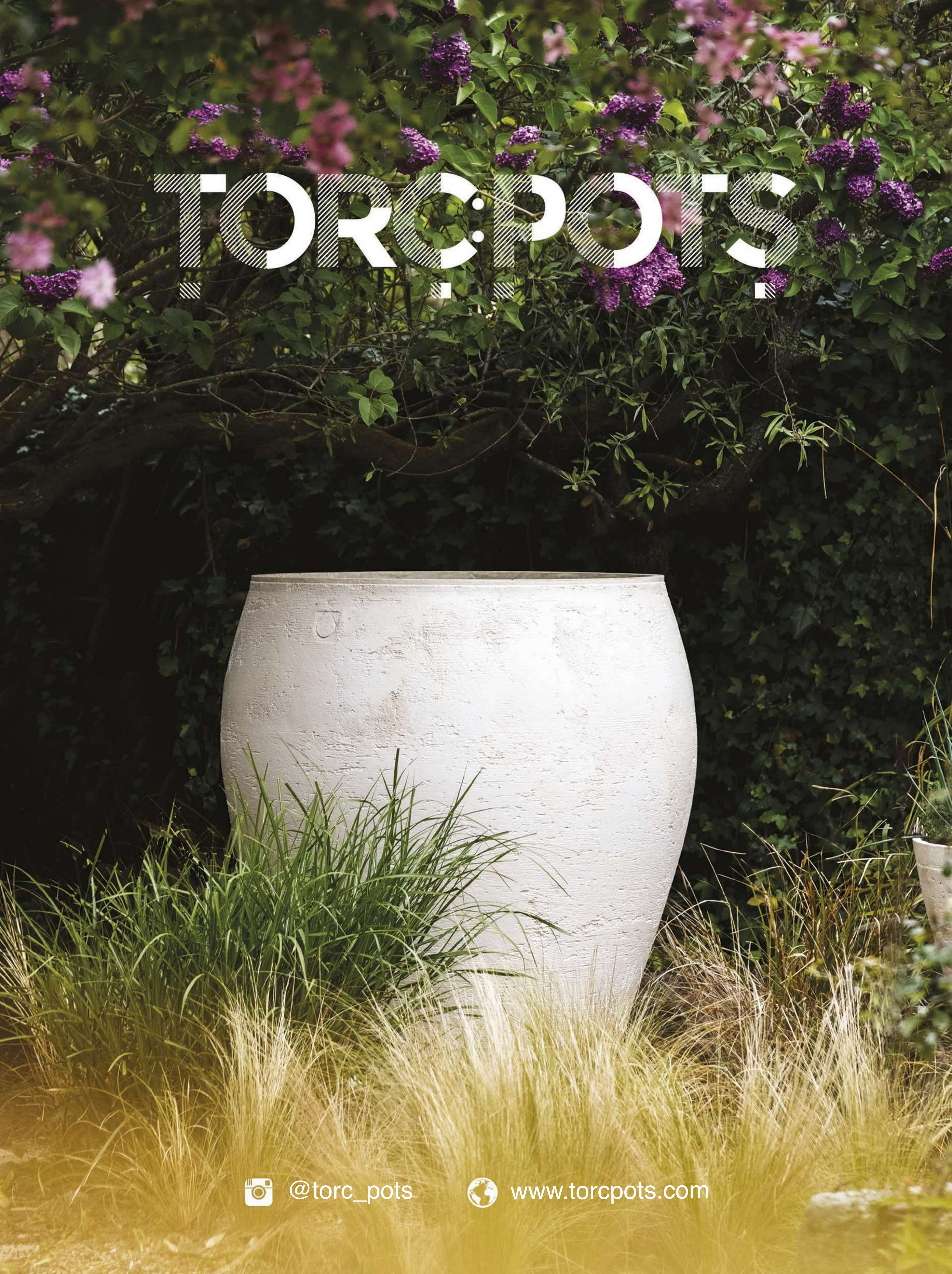
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